

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park: The Next Chapter.

Greg Clark

May 2025

1. Places that host the world

There is a special vibration in places that have hosted the world. At contests, events, exhibition, global moments, or through significant breakthroughs and discoveries, where there are global dimensions or audiences involved, the meaning of place is amplified. The echoes of a gathering of global significance project a quality of epic import. Hosting can produce a future of outsized expectations, and enable a level of ambition beyond the normal cycles of change.

A geo-political summit, a great discovery, the end of a war, or the hosting of a great sporting event, can be the trigger for a place to redefine its meaning within larger contexts and bigger geographies, and with higher expectations than is otherwise possible. This is because the whole world has somehow borne witness to a catalyst of change. That place becomes 'anointed' for deeper meaning, and its progress is followed more keenly. Expectations are raised.

London's soft power.

London has hosted more than its share. The ultimately peaceful transition of the Norman Conquest led to the new charter for The City of London that was agreed at The Guildhall in 1067, and set in train an 'open city contract' of 'live and let live' between Merchants and Monarch that has lasted almost a thousand years. London is a negotiated city. The Great Fire of London in 1666 became an international story that allowed London to discover, and then promote, its innate regenerative power.

London 1838 Regents Park & Bloomsbury

In a short period at the start of the nineteenth century Bloomsbury was created as a new quarter on what was then a growth edge of London. Regent's Park's inner circle was designed in 1838 and then opened to the public. It became one of London's great parks with one of the world's great scientific establishments at its heart; the London Zoo.

George Birkbeck founded something called the Mechanics Institute so that working class men and women could study in the evenings. It became Birkbeck College, one of the world's great institutions for adult learning.

Jeremy Bentham and his cohort founded University College London to be at the radical cutting edge of university teaching and research. Others created the British Museum, St Pancras Station, numerous hospitals, and charitable foundations, that today are world leaders in child health and life sciences.

London 1851 The Great Exhibition South Kensington

The Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, the first of the great World Expos, gave Britain, and the imperial Queen Victoria, a global prominence and a new kind of soft power which the UK has traded on since.

The institutions created to host that show of cultural and scientific might (The Albert Hall, The V&A, The Science, and Natural History, Museums, Imperial College) still define the special zone that is South Kensington in London, and reverberate that 1851 moment.

London 1918 and 1945 The West End

The final days of World Wars 1 and 2, where the deep angst of war give way to wild celebrations in London's West End gave it a special recognition as one of the greatest party venues in the world. That fun loving charisma is now revived every Dec 31st as revellers party passionately in our city and its waterfront.

London 1951 The Festival of Britain and the South Bank

Six years after the end of WWII, with the UK still in the doldrums, and one hundred years since the Great Exhibition that had endowed South Kensington, the Festival of Britain was inaugurated to restore national pride, provide a 'tonic' for people, and to begin the regeneration of the South Bank of the Thames. The Festival of Britain events covered Science, Art, Technology, and Design and were distributed across the UK with exhibits in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast, York, Liverpool, Oxford, Cambridge, and more.

The first cycle regeneration of London's South Bank were anchored by The Dome Discovery, the Skylon, and the Royal Festival Hall, and paved the way for subsequent enlargements and expansions to host The National Theatre(s), National Film Theatre (BFI South Bank), Purcell Room, Hayward Gallery, and multiple national orchestras.

This created a cultural hub south of the river and provided a spur to multiple cycles of waterfront regeneration that were continued and augmented by the Millennium celebrations in 2000.

London 2012 Stratford

In our current times, there is one new place that has also acquired this status. A location of special meaning because of the things it has hosted, the audiences that witnessed it, the processes of change that were involved in making it happen, and the shared venture that will now be required to optimise its potential.

In the summer of 2012, London hosted the XXX Olympiad, including The Olympic and Paralympic Games at the newly minted London Olympic Park (since renamed Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, QEOP), in a district adjacent to Stratford in East London. The zone had been reclaimed from its varied and disparate roles as a Dog Racing Track, a 'Fridge Mountain', Breakers Yards, and polluting light industrial uses, to become the stage for the Olympic Games in a modern global city. It came to be the catalyst for a process of wider and deeper reinvention and regeneration that forged a fresh location that hosts key ingredients in London's future recipe for success. The world came to London in 2012, saw the transformation and ambition, witnessed the great sporting contests, and noted that the place itself, and London more widely, were changed forever.

Barcelona 1992 Reversing Urban 'Lock-In'.

London accepted an inheritance that may come to be seen as an endowment from Barcelona in 1992.

That is, to use the hosting of the Olympics not simply as means to welcome the world, make physical change happen, and modernise infrastructures, but rather to reorientate a whole city and its spatial systems so that it works differently, and creates new value, as a result. The full reorientation of a city is about reimagining, escaping from several centuries of being locked-in to old spatial models, stimulating and unlocking a new geometry. The aim is to undo a dependency and set a new path.

In Barcelona, the 1992 Olympic Games gave the post-industrial city an accessible and visitable waterfront that it had not had for 150 years. Factories, logistics, railways, and power stations had

separated the city from the sea. Thirty-three years of progressive regeneration and evolution since the 1992 Olympic reset have redefined what Barcelona is, a post-industrial economy where Science, Art, Music, Culture, Dance, Sport and Innovation flourish.

The first cycles of post-Olympic development in Barcelona were physical, but they are now increasingly social, economic, cultural, environmental, and scientific. The 1992 Olympics were an expression of a self-confident intent to re-make Barcelona. They stretched and redefined the city, creating new capacity and capabilities for wider change. Physical change gave confidence to other transitions.

2. London 2012: The Back Story - 'We Live by the River'.

The 2012 Games were championed from the outset by the people of East London. They were the first to propose that the Games be held in the east of the city. The aspiration was not simply to change and improve the area, but rather to redefine London, by remaking its east.

East London.

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games gave London the mechanism to reorientate our city by endowing East London with assets, connections, amenities, and anchors that it had not enjoyed for almost 500 years.

Since the 1500s it was the site of London's hard-working Docks, and since the 1800s, its heavy Industries. Our maritime prowess had enabled trade and naval success, but had also embedded spatial specialisation and segregation in our city for half a millennium. The combination of an easterly flowing great tidal River Thames, with a westerly wind, worked together to push ships out towards mainland Europe, and draw them in again on the tide. That westerly wind also blew away the smells of manufacture towards the sea, and not towards the genteel folk of central and west London.

These 'endowed traits' from nature and climate were harnessed for prosperity, but in the process they had defined East London, not just as the logical place for a port, but also the best location for heavy industries, and armament production. East London ultimately also became a place of great social diversity; one of the only accessible and affordable entry gateways into London for poorer migrant populations from all corners of the world.

Re-endowing East London.

As a consequence of this geography and history East London was poorer, more polluted, less well-connected to the rest of the metropolis, more targeted during war times, and, consequently, with greater dereliction than West, North, South or Central London. Despite its great social vitality, East London's physical and institutional assets were smaller and narrower than other parts of London. The de-industrialisation, and wider changes to port and maritime industries, in the 1960s and 1970s further exposed the narrowness of the East London economy, and a perceived permanent disadvantage set in.

In the early 2000s people in East London wanted to promote change. They wanted to change the way London works so that the abundance of talent, diversity, and ambition in East London could be augmented with the kinds of institutions, assets, infrastructures, and opportunities enjoyed across the whole city. The 2012 Olympics were a catalyst to rebalance London: a re-orientation West-East. London had promised an Olympic Games with a driving ambition of regeneration, convergence, and transformation. London 'made no little plans'.

At the heart of this transformation agenda is the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP). Built to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and with the pre-planned imperative to convert to modes

equivalent to the effect of the founding of Bloomsbury, South Kensington, or the South Bank in previous eras, QEOP anchors the re-endowment of East London.

2. QEOP The Next Cycle of the Olympic Park

Now in 2025, 13 years on from the Games, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is entering a new cycle. The retrofit of the Park to its 'legacy mode' is now almost complete. The Park is populated by outstanding cultural anchors, learned institutions, design genius, facilities, amenities, businesses, and ventures. It is home to residents old and new, and visited by locals, students, tourists, athletes, sportspeople, revellers, workers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and sports fans every day of the week. Here is a great new urban park, with world class universities, Olympic standard sport stadia, museums, design and cultural institutions, homes, amenities, and vitality. QEOP is not just a new South Kensington, or a new Bloomsbury, it is a co-creation between East London communities and institutional renewal.

QEOP in London is still in its early life. The evolution is being mapped and charted. This essay looks at it in 3 distinct cycles, and attempts to characterise their special ingredients. This is designed to help capture the process of change:

Cycle 1 2000 to 2012

Olympic bidding, site assembly, preparation, planning for future use, and hosting.

Cycle 2 2012 to 2024

Post Games transformation and build out of the Park. The arrival of new partners and anchors.

Cycle 3 2024 to c 2030

The completion of development cycle along with the transition to maturity and optimisation of a new quarter; a new catalyst for East London in a dynamic city.

This might be followed by a further cycle 4 focussed solely on operational optimisation and the continuous process of change and adaptation, or that may be seen as an extension of the new cycle.

Cycle 3 is now beginning. Cycle 2 is not yet fully complete. These cycles overlap in important ways. That overlap brings richness and challenge. The idea is to configure the right arrangements for each cycle, but if the cycles overlap two different things happen at once. This is an important moment for QEOP. The transition from post-Games retrofit and development toward a compelling destination and optimising location, with diverse roles and remits, requires a renewed definition of purpose and a wide alliance of partners.

The essay is about that cycle 3; to imagine and articulate what cycle 3 needs to be. What it can achieve and how it can work. But before we go there, let's remember cycles 1 and 2.

Cycle 1 2000 – 2012: Setting the vision, preparing the site, and hosting the Games.

At the turn of the millennium, East London had just started to be part of an integrated vision of London brought forwards by a new directly elected Mayor created as part of a fresh city leadership model legislated in 1999, and first elected in 2000. The Jubilee Line Extension to Stratford had just opened, improving connections between East London to the rest of the city. Two developers, Chelsfield and Stanhope, had been awarded development rights on the site in Stratford of what would become Queen

Elizabeth Olympic Park. London Docklands was already into a second cycle where global HQs were gathering and maturing.

In 2002, supporting a big idea that gained traction amongst local community leaders, then Mayor Ken Livingstone decided to bid for London to host the Olympics & Paralympic Games. He believed in the opportunity to leverage the Olympics to transform and regenerate this part of East London, create a new dynamic metropolitan centre, and rebalance London West-East. The 6 host boroughs (Newham, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Barking & Dagenham, & Greenwich) by then contained some of London's (and indeed the UK's) most deprived neighbourhoods and communities. The long-term goal was to create economic opportunities, support better lives for residents, and enable a wider set of institutions and organisations to tap into East London's vibrant edge.

London was awarded the Olympic Games by the IOC in July 2005. Between 2005 and 2012, around £6.5bn was invested into transport infrastructure to support the Olympic and Paralympic Games: the new Stratford International station opened as well as the extension of the DLR connecting City Airport to London's city centre through Stratford. In addition, 52 electric pylons were moved and replaced by underground tunnels. 2.3m cubic metre of contaminated soil was cleaned. Construction of the Games infrastructure also started with new sports venues, an Olympic Stadium, an Athletes' Village, and a global Press & Broadcast Centre.

The core idea at the heart of London's Olympic quest was to simultaneously plan for distinct phases, ensuring that decisions and investments made for one phase were enablers, and not inhibitors, for subsequent ambitions. The Games would anticipate, and enable, the transformed future and not constrain it. Thus, the ultimate long term goals of community, environmental, and economic outcomes had to be served, without compromise, in earlier phases; including preparation, hosting, and post Games transformation. One notable example of this was the desire for the Olympics to be a co-created project between communities and authorities. A memorable aspect of this was the 'dents in the fence' programme that made sure that the major construction programme was visible to all and could be narrated by everyone.

In 2009, the Strategic Regeneration Framework was published, setting out the legacy plans for the communities. The main objective and indicator for success was 'convergence'; to bring the socio-economic indicators (employment, health, income, skills) in East London up to a par with the rest of London over the course of 20 years. The Legacy Communities Scheme (LCS) later set out a blueprint for five new neighbourhoods, for a total of 6,800 homes and 130,000 sqm of employment space on the Park alone. Westfield, Europe's largest 'destination retail' centre opened in 2011.

The significant subsequent investment in transport and social infrastructure and the hosting of the Olympics helped change perceptions of East London. 200 hectares of brownfield land, waterways and rail were transformed. During the 2012 Games, it was estimated that 3.6 billion viewers — more than half the world's population at the time — saw at least one minute of television coverage from London. By the end of the Olympics, the Park had been recognised as a destination, capable of hosting world-class events, anointed and appointed to drive London's reset.

Whilst 2000 had marked the creation of the Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority, several agencies were established to deliver regeneration in different parts of the Olympics site:

- **The London Thames Gateway Development Corporation** was set up by the Government to lead the regeneration of the Lower Lea Valley and London Riverside, two growth areas along the Thames Gateway.

- **The Olympics Delivery Authority** was established in 2006 to deliver the infrastructure, venues and facilities in the Park. The ODA was also later responsible for the conversion of the Athletes Village into accommodation.
- **The Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC)**, jointly owned by the Mayor and central government, was established in 2009 to lead and take forward decisions on the legacy and transformation of the Park post-Games. It devised a masterplan for the site in 2010.
- **Local Authorities** retained planning, investment and regeneration powers for areas within their boroughs that fell outside of the remit of the other organisations.

The OPLC was replaced in April 2012 with the **London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC)**, established as a Mayoral Development Corporation. With full planning powers, it has been responsible for delivering the cycle 2 transformational legacy, and continuing the development, management and maintenance of the park. It was also tasked to drive long-term sustainable investment opportunities to promote regeneration across the Park and surrounding neighbourhoods.

Quotes.

Central government

“London’s bid was built on a special Olympic vision. That vision is of an Olympic Games that will be not only a celebration of sport but a force for regeneration. The games will transform one of the poorest and most deprived areas of London. They will create thousands of new jobs and homes. They will offer new opportunities for business in the immediate area and throughout London.” –

Jack Straw, then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on the day London was awarded the Games (2005)

“Let’s make sure the Olympics legacy lifts east London from being one of the poorest parts of the country to one that shares fully in the capital’s growth and prosperity” –

David Cameron, then Prime Minister (2010)

“London 2012 has raised the bar on sustainability, not just for future Olympic and Paralympic Games but for industry, and for the organizers of major events the world over.”

Shaun McCarthy, Chair, Commission for a Sustainable London 2012

““The Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 will be just the beginning of the story for East London. The OPLC has created an inspirational vision for the Park that meets the needs of the existing community and opens the door to new residents and investors. It will be a unique hub of social, sporting, cultural, environmental and economic excellence which will benefit the city for decades to come.”

Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (2012)¹

Local government

“I didn’t bid for the Olympics because I wanted three weeks of sport ... I bid for the Olympics because it’s the only way to get the billions of pounds out of the government to develop the east end — to clean the soil, put in the infrastructure and build the housing. ... it’s exactly how I plotted it, to ensnare the government to put money into an area it has neglected for 30 years.” –

Ken Livingstone, former Mayor of London 2000-2008

“The Games is seeing a rapid physical regeneration of some of the poorer parts of our capital but it was always an imperative to ensure this historic event worked as a positive force for local residents, closing the gap between quality of life in the host boroughs and the rest of London. [...] This programme is being seen as an exemplar which can now be replicated in London and across the UK”

Boris Johnson, Mayor at the time (2012)

LLDC

“You can’t deliver a high-quality place without a clear vision and collaborative endeavour. It takes a lot of hands to do that, with or without the kind of centralizing force’ of a mayoral development corporation (MDC)” –

Selina Mason, formerly Deputy Head of Design ODA and also Director of Design Integration, LLDC

Partners

““We would like to regenerate the East End of London, and we will find the best architects in the world to deliver beautiful venues. But if we don’t get the long-term legacy right, then the capital investment that the Games bring to bear will have been wasted. This was the premise from the very beginning.”

Bill Hanway, then Executive Director Operations EDAW

“A statue of Chairios stood beside the Olympic Stadium in Ancient Greece. Chairios, a god of time. Not tedious ticking time, but the Shining Moment; the Moment to be seized; Opportunity. Chairios was a runner, shaven except for a long forelock. Chairios exhorts us to know where we’re going so we can grab hold of Opportunity as it runs towards us. Be unprepared and it’s too late. The Moment passes. Grasping Chairios is the story of QEOP so far, in so many ways.

My grandfather once gave me a book, *West Ham: Fifty Years a Borough*, written in 1936. It had a picture of the Royal Docks filled with ships, captioned *Gateway to the World*. Goods came and went and, as important, people and ideas came to-and-fro. We must imagine the QEOP cluster as a gateway, a portal, between the UK’s growth sectors and the world. A place where goods and services and people and ideas move to-and-fro across the world. Not at the speed of sail and steam as before ... but at the speed of light in a digital age.

Paul Brickell

Cycle 2 2012 – 2024: The QE Olympic Park: transformation.

The effervescence of the Olympics was followed by a two-year period of transformation and adaptation as the Park shifted from “hosting” to “legacy” mode. As the venues that hosted thousands of people were closed for transformation for use by the general public, including the transformation of the London stadium for multi-uses including Athletics and Football. LLDC was responsible for identifying and securing the long-term operators for the permanent venues. The North Park reopened in 2013, followed one year later by the South part of the Park. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP) was renamed after HM The Queen in 2013, to commemorate her Diamond Jubilee.

Since 2012, when the LLDC took over responsibility from the Olympic Park Legacy Company the freehold (and some leasehold) ownership of land that had already been acquired by the LDA for the Games and transferred to the OPLC was conveyed to the LLDC, establishing a large-scale area within single ownership. It was assigned responsibility for selecting organisations to develop the park into a number of residential ‘neighbourhoods’.

The next few years saw LLDC bid for and win the hosting of international sport events: the 1st European Games, the 2015 Rugby World cup, the 2017 World Athletics. In addition, more events were organised for the local communities and Londoners, such as a cycling event RideLondon. The Olympic Stadium re-opened in 2016, as London Stadium, home to both West Ham United Football Club, UK Athletics (UKA) and a wide range of other events and activities. Abba Voyage then opened in 2022 and has also welcomed more than 1m visitors, becoming the 6th most visited paid attraction in London in 2022.

A major initiative, again initiated by East Londoners and then grown and realised by the LLDC and the GLA is the delivery of £1.1bn East Bank. Initially dubbed “Olympicopolis”, by then Mayor Boris Johnson, the vision emerged more than 10 years ago. Rather than the planned focus on housing, the initial inspiration to host world class institutions was revived and the plans adjusted with the aim to create a new platform and concentration for arts, education, culture, and creativity in London, so as to leave a lasting benefit to the communities that hosted the Games and for the investing institutions.

Echoing the spirit of Bloomsbury in the early nineteenth century, and South Kensington in 1851, the idea was to convene the world’s great culture, design, research, scientific, and educational institutions in one inspiring place, so they could renew themselves by connecting with the East London energy, spark each other, shape opportunities, and engage East London’s global communities in a spirit of reciprocity. East London’s creative edge and the fuel from the Olympics would combine to enable prestigious institutions to find new paths into a fertile future.

University College London and University of the Arts London, London College of Fashion, opened new campuses and are being joined by other world-class cultural institutions such as the V&A, Sadler’s Wells and the BBC in the next year or so. Sadler’s Wells opens in Feb 25. The V&A is expected to open in Autumn 2025 and the BBC in 2026.

In the East Village, 2818 units were built by the ODA as the athletes’ village and then sold on/converted by Delancy and Triathlon Homes, the latter being a consortium of housing associations that took the 50% that were affordable housing. Two developers, Tailor Wimpey and L&Q were also appointed to develop the first major new housing development on-Park Chobham Manor. Now fully complete, the award winning Chobham Manor comprises 840 homes, 75% of which are 2 bed plus and 38% of which are affordable.

Through delivery agreements, and more recently joint ventures, LLDC has been able to maintain design excellence in all developments as well as affordability. Their insistence on excellence in inclusive design led to their ‘spinning off’ the Global Disability Innovation Hub, which now delivers a £100m government-sponsored programme supporting the development of inclusive design and assistive technology with disabled people across the world. Outside the Park, new mixed-use neighbourhoods broke ground, such as Fish Island Village, a joint venture between housing association Peabody and housebuilder Hill, with workspace managed by social enterprise The Tramperry.

Progress is ongoing on 3 other QEOP neighbourhoods; Eastwick & Sweetwater, Stratford Waterfront & Bridgewater, and Rick Roberts Way. Together they will deliver 3,500 homes in total on completion. Another 1,000-unit development, Pudding Mill Lane, is planned. Three other town centres have been

developed outside the park; in Hackney Wick Central, Chobham Farm North and Bromley by Bow. LLDC aims to sell some of the land at its disposal.

The Park has also become a place for experience, business, and innovation. Post-Games, the Press and Broadcast Centre was transformed into Here East, a digital and creative campus, providing dynamic and affordable office and studio space for businesses in London, supported by a rich eco-system of investors and entrepreneurs. BT Sport were the first tenant of Here East and have now relocated, and in 2015, Loughborough University London opened to postgraduate students. Now, almost fully let, Here East has created and supported more than 10,000 jobs and around 1/3rd of its gross value add has gone back to the 4 boroughs around the Park. Businesses, large and small, involved in joint programmes and collaboration opportunities, have flourished. Plexal, a leading innovator and business incubator, opened in 2017, and is now home to more than 100 member businesses.

Significant businesses have committed to move to the area, to Here East and to the International Quarter London, now known as Stratford Cross, a new business neighbourhood that is already home to Transport for London, the Financial Conduct Authority, Cancer Research UK, the British Council and UNICEF.

QEOP's SHIFT has been created as convening platform to accelerate the innovation quotient of the Park, and is dedicated to powering better futures through discovery, testing, dissemination, and scale-up innovation. Along with Here East, it aims to use the Park as a real-life test bed for multiple place based innovations.

By 2016, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park had received as many as 60 awards for its design excellence and 2024 marked the 11th consecutive time it was awarded the Green Flag Award for its sustainability achievements. The Park has established itself as a true work, live, play destination in London, welcoming more than 20m visits annually. Nearly 12,500 housing units have been completed in 10 years and 130m passengers go through Stratford station every year.

LLDC has signed new partnerships to deliver its vision, both for neighbourhoods, and also to retain, develop and attract businesses on and around the Park. Different delivery structures and partnership models have enabled LLDC to be an active custodian, and retain control over each development to ensure standards and objectives around design quality, accessibility, sustainability, employment creation and long-term value capture are met.

- **Development Agreements.** For Chobham Manor and East Wick and Sweetwater, LLDC has entered into development agreements. It receives a share of receipts from completed homes at the point of sale. East Wick, land ownership was converted into part ownership of the private rental scheme, providing a source of long-term revenue.
- **Joint Ventures.** LLDC has entered a JV agreement with Ballymore for the delivery of Stratford Waterfront and Bridgewater. A special purpose vehicle was incorporated in 2021, with loan from the GLA. A joint venture is also being negotiated for Pudding Mill Lane.
- **Direct development.** For East Bank, LLDC has taken on the development management role itself, providing it with full control over this project.

In addition to its role as a planning authority and landowner, LLDC has been adopting a convenor role to bring together partners and deliver joint programmes and initiatives. The key partners are identified in the table below.

London Boroughs

The 4 Olympic Boroughs have continued proactive leaderships of the wider development of East London and the interaction of interdependence of the QEOP with its neighbouring municipalities. Their work to define the longer term purpose of the reconfiguration and reorientation of East London had been fundamental. On 1 December 2024 the Planning Powers will be returned to the London Boroughs for the QEOP.

Community

Community Anchors have been the torch bearers of the vision that the regeneration of East London would not only improve quality of life, but would also unleash institutional renewal for the organisations that have re-established themselves there.

Business partners

Businesses have been particularly active at Here East and at Stratford Cross. Both Here East and Lendlease have partnered on various local employment schemes, youth and workforce development activities, community engagement programmes with the aim to create more jobs and drive economic growth for local communities.

These partners have worked together in specific platforms and programmes. Co-created with East Londoners, these provide pipelines for young, diverse talent and entrepreneurship into the Park's business base:

- **SHIFT.** SHIFT is a partnership between seven cross-sector organisations (LLDC, UCL, UAL:LCE, Loughborough University, Here East, Plexal, Lendlease) to set up the UK's first and largest 'inclusive innovation district'. The programme of investment, partnerships and research reflects the partners' commitment to an agenda of generating and supporting research and innovation for future cities, focusing on critical themes such as climate resilience, urban mobility and health and wellbeing.
- **East Bank.** Collaboration between Sadler's Wells, University of the Arts London (UAL), University College London (UCL) and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) – as well as other academic partners including Loughborough University, London and UCL Partners, and the Foundation for Future London. In addition to the cultural programme, LLDC and the East Bank partners have launched East Ed, an Education and Careers programme designed to create and deliver learning opportunities for young people across the boroughs. Bespoke workshops are organised across various disciplines throughout the year and every year a summer school and a careers week are organised to connect young people to skills development and career pathways.
- **Good Growth Hub.** The LLDC has co-designed and co-delivered the Good Growth Hub programmes with employers and local young people. This co-design process facilitates the implementation of talent acquisition strategies and means that the programmes respond to employer challenges. For example, East Bank partners play an active role in designing GGH services through programme steering groups, delivering content for training programmes, providing mentoring, and recruiting talent to live opportunities.
- **Developers and housebuilders.** LLDC has established a green construction skills centre of excellence (Build East) in partnership with Transport for London and Construction Industry Training Board. The aim is to deliver training, jobs and apprenticeships and enable construction companies to innovate with new approaches to skills development.

- **Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and venue Operators.** LLDC continues to work with LVRP as a neighbour and venue operator for tennis and hockey centres, to expand its visitor offer and host successful high-quality events, ranging from international sports competition to e-sport events and community events.

Destination and Experience.

Increasingly, as cycle 2 comes to an end, there is focus on the destination power and the rich experience of QEOP. Effective marketing and place-making have combined to create a compelling location which is admired and loved, recognised as a special place in London that is able to combine a visitor experience with being significant place of work, seat of learning, and platform for innovation. QEOP is becoming a branded experience; a place that enriches.

Quotes.

Central government

"The fantastic regeneration the Olympic Games brought to some of the poorest parts of East London must be continued. This excellent project brings together new housing with a world class university and museum and has the real prospect of creating a new centre of culture and learning in London. I am behind it 100 per cent."

George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (2013)²

"The legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games is going from strength to strength with the economic, sporting and social benefits being felt by communities across the country"

Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport³

"I am delighted to confirm the Government's financial support for this exciting project. Building on the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic legacy, this ambitious scheme will create an exciting new cultural hub in East London. East Bank is also about creating new opportunities and innovation to drive greater prosperity for this area and help change lives. Through this multi-million pound contribution Government is helping to bring these exceptional institutions and thousands of jobs to the area. It will deliver a huge boost to the local economy and a renewed vision for East London." –

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, Communities Secretary (2018)

"We have not built enough homes in the capital over the last 30 years, and it's ordinary Londoners who are paying the price. Brick by brick we are turning that around and this investment in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will help get more than 1,500 properties built"

Kit Malthouse, then Housing Minister (2019)⁴

"London is the undisputed leader of European tech, with billions of investment flowing in every year and world-leading firms developing groundbreaking innovations. This new [cybersecurity innovation] centre in the Olympic Park will build on the site's legacy of excellence and spark a wave of creativity to develop the cyber security technology of the future and help protect the nation's industry."

Margot James, Minister for digital and creative industries (2024)⁵

Local government

“Stratford Waterfront is set to become a world leading centre of culture and higher education [...]. The project is expected to generate nearly £2bn and bring 3,000 new jobs to the Olympic Park” –

Boris Johnson, then Mayor of London (2015)⁶

“My vision for East Bank is one where everyone, regardless of their background, can access world-class culture and education on their doorstep. East Bank is a fantastic collaboration of interdisciplinary work and world-class institutions that will drive forward growth and inspire more young Londoners to take up creative careers, transforming the communities of east London.”

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London (2018)⁷

“East Bank represents the most significant single investment in London’s culture since the legacy of the 1851 Great Exhibition, and will shape the cultural life of the city for the 21st century and beyond. Today’s announcement is a major step forward in realising one of the most ambitious culture projects the capital has ever seen.”

Justine Simons OBE, Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries (2018)

“In the 10 years since the Olympic and Paralympic games, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park has been at the centre of a vast regeneration project the impact of which has been felt across London and the whole of the UK. [...] Whether through housing, culture, tech or sporting achievement, I am proud that the Olympic legacy continues to shine.” –

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

LLDC

“London 2012 was the greatest games ever, and the work to secure the legacy here in east London through an inclusive approach to local people and the development of the east London economy has become a blueprint for every Olympics and Paralympics since.” –

Sir Peter Hendy CBE, chair of London Legacy Development Corporation

“From what I see going there every day, it is about [every] 12 to 18 months that this place fundamentally moves on and changes.”

Peter Maxwell, Director of Design, LLDC

Partners

“In some ways, although we’re 10 years on, we’re actually 30 years on, because the whole ambition, the whole scale of change, grew out of work that was done much earlier than the Olympic project.”

Jerome Frost, former Head of Design and Regeneration at the ODA

“Stratford 10 years ago was not an area you’d consider to be a business district, and you wouldn’t want to live there if you could avoid it. But that has all changed. [...] We see it as a perfect example of the private sector stepping into a public sector-created opportunity”

Gavin Poole, Here East CEO

“Stratford is a place inspired by an Olympic dream with a passion for excellence and achievement since the 2012 Games. Since then, the area has been transformed and IQL has emerged as a neighbourhood of forward thinkers, innovators and creators. It’s a place where the biggest names from academia, fashion, technology and science can sit shoulder to shoulder and drive change.”

Kristy Lansdown, Project Director, Lendlease Development Europe

“You can plan to a certain extent, but you’ve also got to change direction when good opportunities come along. ... what LLDC has done well is to grasp those opportunities”

Clive Pane, Partner and Head of Planning and Development, Deloitte

“That central government support was the seed investment, if you like, in east London, that people, businesses and institutions have only [perhaps] for six or seven years started to capitalize on.”

Hari Sothinathan, former Director, Deloitte UK

‘It feels to me like there’s been a successful balance of creating something that’s got a national and international status but still making it somewhere where local people feel welcome.’ –

Tom Jones, Senior Principal, Populous

“We’re really seeing an emergence of a community that is much more organic. And that it just feels a lot more natural. [Earlier] it felt quite forced. Everybody wanted it to work; there was a real desire to make the legacy function”

Rebecca Rosmini, business owner and resident

Cycle 3 2024 – 2036 Orchestration and Optimisation.

As we approach 2025, we will enter the beginning of cycle 3 for the QEOP and its partners. These cycles are forged by multiple shifts and changes, and unlike the 2012 switchover from cycle 1 to 2, after the hosting of the Games, cycles 2 and 3 are initially overlapping. Several features mark the shift:

- The near completion of the **planning phases of QEOP** and adjacent sites for future development.
- The return of **planning powers to the Boroughs**, and a tighter geography for the Park’s definition.
- The continuation of LLDC to **secure the final developments** and to shift fully and primarily into the longer-term park custodian role.
- Arrival and opening of the **full complement of longer term anchors and institutions**, and the transition to operational maturity and optimisation of key districts and quarters within the park.
- New leadership (**new Chair and new CEO**) of the LLDC.
- A long term desire to drive QEOP towards a self-sustaining financial position, with limited, if any, reliance on the public purse for day to day operation.

- The growth of **Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park as a strong destination and experience brand**. The shift towards the use of QEOP as the key name of the place and its community.

This cycle will include a cycle of development that is not due to complete until the mid-2030s, at which point LLDC will most likely further develop its role as the custodian of the fully developed QEOP.

The cycle transition is also a reflection of wider changes in London and beyond:

- A new national government, a mayor re-elected for a historic third term, and new and ongoing proactive borough leaders, producing **increasing political alignment** at all 3 levels.
- Changes in the advanced economies of global cities like London, many driven by technological and geo-political shifts, are producing opportunities to capture a substantial share of **innovation economy leadership** across multiple sectors and domains.
- Post-covid changes in citizen and worker behaviour have shifted the sense of choice of when and how and where people live, work, consume, and play. This has placed a new premium on locations that can host and activate the **experience economy**.
- Despite the challenges caused by BREXIT, London's **population continues to grow** rapidly with international immigration a major source of new Londoners.
- Global challenges in climate, geo-politics, security, technology inequality, supply chains, are contriving to create an age of **complexity and uncertainty** where trust is low, and a sense of belonging and inclusion is highly valued but challenging to achieve

New Cycle Agendas

These varied ingredients are coming together in a wide range of new initiatives that seek to define the new cycle in London's development. They provide new opportunities to articulate how the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park can play its role.

- **A new London Growth Plan and National Industrial Strategy**

London is formulating a new Growth Plan, led by Mayor and supported by London & Partners. QEOP is a significant destination in the experience economy and a growing cluster in the innovation economy. London's Growth plan will contribute to a National Industrial Strategy that the Government is now consulting upon.

- **The New London Agenda**

Created by 500 of London's leading private and public bodies in the the Built Environment, this Agenda outlines how London's physical fabric can shape the future city to achieve a revised world city that is fair, green, and productive using new imagination, design principles, demonstrators, and new investment platforms.

- **Opportunity London**

A partnership programme between The Mayor, London & Partners, and The NLA to promote investment into London's polycentric character by promoting large scale opportunities beyond the defined geographies of central London.

Each of these initiatives is an opportunity to position QEOP and partners for success in this cycle.

The Character of Cycle 3.

We can recognise some of the features of cycle 3 by noting the progress from the previous cycles through themes. If cycle 1 was about regeneration, and cycle 2 was about convergence, cycle 3 might

be seen to be about excellence. Cycle 1 was about Olympics, cycle 2 Legacy, and cycle 3 is optimisation. There are wider transitions at play, from a focus on a large integrated single site with spillovers, to a series of adjacencies and inter-dependencies with the 4 neighbouring boroughs, and the wider East London sub-region, and Greater London. East London as a sub-region is changed for ever and the combination of QEOP, renewal at Canary Wharf and The Royal Docks, large scale regeneration in Barking & Dagenham, and the continued maturation of the quality of life and place in all parts of East London now suggest scope for a clearer strategy and leadership across this emerging part of the metropolis. Other shifts are visible. From a single major stakeholder to a wide variety of strategic partners. From land use planning systems to innovation eco-systems. From sites and infrastructure to brand, identity, experience, and curation. From hard power to soft power.

These changes all point to a new partnership imperative, where QEOP will need to lead collaborations, alliances, and consortia, and where some collaboration platforms will be led by other partners. This will require mutually of trust and confidence between the partners.

There are 7 initial imperatives for the first years of cycle 3:

- Complete the build out of the Park (complete cycle 2) and attract the infrastructure investment required to operate the Park at full capacity (eg Stratford Station).
- Optimise the range of world leading institutions now in the Park through a QEOP Alliance
- Maintain the high quality of place and high standards of sustainability
- Drive the Competitive Edges of the QEOP as the locus for high value and pioneering activity.
- Deepen the commitment to community benefit and empowerment through the Inclusive Economy programme.
- Initiate a brand alliance to build a confident identity and Story.
- Develop a revised organisational form and revenue models to be able to sustain the high investment high return equilibrium that has driven cycles 1 and 2.

Opportunities in Cycle 3: the QEOP Value Proposition.

Contributing positively to London's Growth Plan and the wider agenda of London's future economy is an important opportunity for QEOP. To this QEOP and Partners can bring a significant value proposition.

QEOP concentrates and reflects London's greatest strengths. The Olympic Park reflects the dynamism and deep character of London including:

- The Power of Reinvention and confidence with change
- Openness to the World and its Communities.
- Dynamic Diversity and the Creativity its brings and fosters.
- Pioneering new approaches, building new markets, leading and codifying new trends.
- Bringing the conditions, markets, and frameworks for scalability.

These are the hallmarks of London's success for 500 years. QEOP embodies them. The QEOP also brings **unique location factors** that can optimise its contribution to London's next cycle of success:

- i. **Talent.** The **people and communities** of East London that bring youth, diversity, aspiration, global connections, and edge towards the future.
- ii. **Power.** The **combined scale, power, and prestige** of the Park partners including world leading scientific, cultural, design, technological, and enterprise institutions.
- iii. **Quality & Sustainability.** The high quality of the park, its **design, amenities and sustainability**.
- iv. **Connections.** The continuously **improving connectivity** within London and beyond.

- v. **Reach.** The **QEOP global audience** that has been established in cycles 1 and 2 and its growing rapidly.
- vi. **Pioneer.** The ability to fertilise the park as a testbed, incubator, urban laboratory, experimental zone to trial **new technologies, applications, and platforms**, with the partners. The park is itself an innovation, and it has the aptitude to host and curate innovation in multiple domains.
- vii. **Scale and Value Venturing.** The translational capabilities of the partners and their appetites to translate ideas and concepts into products, applications, and experience is ripe.
- viii. **Agility.** The QEOP and partners are on a journey together with a shared appetite for reinvention and ignition. There is confidence to adapt and organise around opportunity.
- ix. **Combinations.** The **distinctive combinations** of residential with destination, experience economy with innovation economy, of sport with culture, of retail with education, providing a hyper concentration of urban characteristics in one place producing almost infinite opportunities for accelerated creatively and co-benefits.
- x. **Leadership & Values.** The **leadership of the Mayor** and the **ownership of the Park by Londoners for Londoners**. The partnership of the **4 London Boroughs** and the seasoned collaboration that have with and for the QEOP. The long term commitment to inclusion, participation, and common endeavour.

With a value proposition such as this, QEOP is set to become a significant location in London's emerging future. As the legacy mode of cycle 2 gives way to the optimisation mode of cycle 3, the reverberations of the glorious days of the summer of 2012 can ignite and inspire the QEOP and partners to new feats of aspiration and achievement.

Quotes

LLDC

"We have transformed Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park into a thriving new part of the city, working and delivering with the talented and diverse communities around us. We have delivered thousands of homes, two new business districts and brought thousands of jobs to the area." –

Lyn Garner, Former CEO, LLDC 2024

Park Partners

"When the planning powers for Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park are returned to the four local boroughs and a reset LLDC has been established, there needs to be a mechanism which ties the major Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park players together in some way. It's currently based very much on relationships, goodwill, mutual respect and recognition. But that's not necessarily an effective basis for ensuring the successful development and activation of an evolving Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park over the next decade" –

Shaun Dawson, Chief Executive Lea Valley Regional Park Authority (2022)

"[The Copper Box Arena] is an extraordinary facility that brings thousands of people together to enjoy sports and community activities and is an integral part of the regeneration of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. [...] We have strong relationships with the world class organisations, clubs and event promoters who call the venue home – so this extension of our partnership with LLDC ensures continuity, sustainability and further benefits for community users, spectators and sport."

Peter Bunday, CEO of GLL, Copper Box Arena operator

““It’s no longer a ‘you must be joking, why would we go to Stratford’ — it’s a ‘yes, of course’.” –

Gavin Poole, Chief Executive of Here East⁸

East Bank Partners

“East Bank has been conceived with partnership and collaboration at its heart from the outset. This is a gamechanger as it allows us to truly work at scale, fully embed ourselves locally, and leverage our collective resource, expertise and ambitions. It is a model that will ensure lasting impact, and there is scope to replicate it elsewhere with great success.” –

Tamsin Ace, East Bank Director

“East Bank brings together culture, arts, education and inspiration and this bold investment will transform the lives of so many for generations to come. But legacy doesn’t end when the buildings open, glorious though they are. The real legacy of East Bank will be the world’s future artists, creators, innovators and pioneers who will come from East London.”

Justine Simons OBE, Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries⁹

“Collaboration is at the heart of the East Bank project and with the opening of our new campus for London College of Fashion, UAL we are forging partnerships and creating new opportunities and connections with the schools, communities, and industries of East London and beyond.”

James Purnell, President and Vice Chancellor, University of the Arts London

“East Bank is an extraordinary moment in the evolution of the UK and London’s culture scene – and the V&A is proud to be a part of it, partnering with a truly peerless line-up of creative organisations.”

Tim Reeve, Deputy Director and COO, V&A and Chair of the East Bank Board.

“We are committed to supporting home grown talent in order to maintain our world leading research and teaching. That’s why we’re investing £5m over the next five years in scholarships exclusively for east Londoners to study with us on our UCL East campus on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. UCL is also leading East Bank’s funding for apprenticeship training for local SMEs, incentivising them to support the development and growth of local economies through each of our institutions. Our new campus is at the forefront of innovation in industries ranging from robotics, AI and decarbonising transport through to deepening understanding of culture, nature and the climate crisis. We can’t wait to welcome more east Londoners through our doors to tackle challenges and change the world together.”

Professor Paola Lettieri, Pro-Provost UCL East and Professor of Chemical Engineering at UCL

“The East Bank creative quarter is a perfect home for this new chapter, and we’ll continue our extensive and community-focused work within the Olympic boroughs, which includes musician workshops, live concerts and school visits, as well as world-class programming with our inspirational East Bank partners.”

Sam Jackson, Controller, BBC Radio 3

“The opening programme] reflects our vision for what we hope Sadler’s Wells East will be for many years: a cultural hub that has deep local roots, one that makes tangible national impact and has an international outlook”.

Sir Alistair Spalding CBE, Sadler’s Wells artistic director.¹⁰

“Sometimes the Olympic Park feels like a glamorous island. That’s something that all partners are aware of.”

Britannia Morton, co-chief executive of Sadler’s Wells.¹¹

““East Bank is transforming Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park with the most ambitious cultural project in a generation.”

Simon Ryan, Development Director at Ballymore¹²

“At Stratford Cross we’re part of a quite remarkable transformation of this part of east London. We’ve seen the emergence of a neighbourhood of forward thinkers, innovators and creators. It’s a place where the biggest names from academia, fashion, sport, culture, technology and science are able to sit shoulder to shoulder and drive change.”

Matthew Steenhoek, Executive Director Development, Europe, Lendlease

This is the next Moment we must now seize. The 2012 Games and East Bank had their genesis in East London communities and were realised through creative relationships with the brightest and best in London and UK government and business. Likewise, we will best seize this next Moment by crafting creative relationships between East London communities and QEOP’s world-class institutions and businesses. Not top-down; not bottom-up; but inside-out. The to-and-fro of energy and ideas across the thresholds of QEOP’s institutions; a reciprocity and a mutuality that will change them and change communities.”

Paul Brickell.

Ends

-
- ¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/queen-elizabeth-olympic-park>
- ² <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases-5960>
- ³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/turning-the-games-into-gold-economic-boost-from-london-2012-has-passed-14-billion>
- ⁴ <https://www.propertywire.com/news/uk/londons-olympic-park-to-get-two-new-neighbourhoods-with-over-1500-new-homes/>
- ⁵ <https://gsy.bailiwickexpress.com/gsy/life/technology/world-leading-cyber-security-centre-open-londons-olympic-park/>
- ⁶ https://malcolmreading.com/news/olympicopolis_competition_winner_announced
- ⁷ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-unveils-11bn-vision-for-east-bank>
- ⁸ <https://www.ft.com/content/ad1e3bd7-369e-430f-9c12-7dd1f257e3a3>
- ⁹ <https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/mayor-celebrates-opening-of-uals-london-college-of-fashion-and-announces-joint-cultural-programming-at-east-bank-londons-new-culture-and-education-powerhouse>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/sadlers-wells-east-skatepark-dance-east-bank-b1181139.html>
- ¹¹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2024-london-olympic-legacy/>
- ¹² <https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/our-stories/planning-permission-granted-stratford-waterfront-lldc-and-ballymore-partnership-given>