THE ROLE OF PLACE NARRATIVES IN PLANNING

A STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION OF PLANNING AND REGENERATION POLICIES FOR THE LOWER LEA VALLEY IN EAST LONDON

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the work presented in this thesis is original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted previously for a degree at any other university.

ABBREVIATIONS

BOA	British Olympic Association
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
CTRL	Channel Tunnel Rail Link
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department for Culture Media and Sport
DfL	Design for London
DoE	Department of the Environment
EP	English Partnerships
GLA	Greater London Authority
GLC	Greater London Council
GOL	Government Office for London
IOC	International Olympic Committee
LDA	London Development Agency
LDDC	London Docklands Development Corporation
LLDC	London Legacy Development Corporation
LLV	Lower Lea Valley
LOCOG	London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games
LTGDC	London Thames Gateway Development Corporation
OAPF	Opportunity Area Planning Framework
ODA	Olympic Delivery Authority
OPLC	Olympic Park Legacy Company
QEOP	Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
SDP	Stratford Development Partnership
SRF	Strategic Regeneration Framework
TfL	Transport for London
UDP	Unitary Development Plan

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I explore the role of place narratives in the evolution of planning and regeneration policies for the Lower Lea Valley in east London between 1995 and 2015. The Lower Lea includes the site for the 2012 Olympic Games and is one of London's designated growth areas in the London Plan. Focusing on qualitative dimensions of planning and regeneration policy, I undertake a narrative analysis of a selection of plans and regeneration strategy documents produced during that period and also transcripts of interviews held with twenty-five people who were closely involved in the production of plans and regeneration strategies. I address the concept of narrative in 3 senses: the study of stories of place in documents and conversation and their relationship to policy; the telling of a story as a way to organise and present research findings; and the use of the tools of narrative analysis in the investigation of the research and in drawing conclusions. I address the evolution of narrative themes and also consider the role that the structure of narrative plays in contributing to policy and its influence on change. My central proposition is that narrative plays a key role in the evolution of ideas within a community of policy and decision makers. While planning documents and policy documents are not structured in a storied form, the narrativity of aspects of those policy documents plays an active role in the shifting place narratives for the Lea Valley over time, as I observe in the stories told by the policy makers involved.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Just before 10pm on Sunday 5th June 2012, Usain Bolt lined up in his starting blocks, looked around, smiled and then ran 100 metres in 9:63 seconds to set a new Olympic record and to win his second Olympic gold medal, sealing his position as the fastest man in the world. Ten years earlier, an advisor to the London Mayor visited the land upon which the track was laid, later describing it as 'a hole'. In this thesis I will tell the story of how the Olympic Games transformed the way public officials imagined the future for the area, and how the plans evolved to the point where the Lower Lea Valley would be described as the 'jewel in London's crown'.

1.1 The purpose of this chapter

In this chapter I set the context for the thesis. In Section 1.2 I discuss how the research was initiated. In Section 1.3 I provide an introduction to some key concepts used in the research; an introduction to the setting for the research; a definition of the research problem and my research aim and objectives; finally, I close this chapter with a summary of the purpose of the remaining chapters. In Section 1.3, I introduce and define three concepts central to the research project, namely spatial planning, narrative and place narratives. I establish my understanding of these three categories and how they will be used throughout the thesis. In Section 1.4, I set the scene for my research through a brief introduction to the area, its geographical location and some exploration of its historical, social and economic context. I conclude this section with brief references to some of the different 'stories' that have been told about the Lower Lea Valley. I define the research problem in Section 1.5, and in Section 1.6 I establish my research aims and objectives. Finally, I close the introductory chapter at Section 1.7 with a summary of the remainder of the document, including an introduction to the purpose of each of the chapters that follow.

1.2 How the research was initiated

I have been involved in the planning and urban regeneration of the Lower Lea Valley (LLV) in east London since 1998, when I took the post of Chief Executive of Leaside Regeneration, a government-funded urban regeneration company, in the study area at that time. The Lower Lea, a former area of industry, had suffered long-term decline and had been identified by the government as a zone of change, capable of being restructured and making a contribution to planning growth targets for London and the UK. Leaside Regeneration was a successful public-private partnership with a powerful board of local stakeholders. In that context, around the turn of the century, I was invited to some early discussions with a group of people who were campaigning for the UK to make a bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games, and furthermore for the site of the main Olympic Park to be located in the Lower Lea Valley. In 2002, I joined the London Development Agency (LDA), one of the institutions newly created by the London Mayor, and continued to play a part in promoting the regeneration plans for the Lower Lea. I chaired the client group for the preparation of a masterplan with two main objectives: to encourage regeneration and investment in the Lea Valley, and to provide the basis for the UK's bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games.

My own background and experience had left me somewhat sceptical of the power of plans and planning to generate large scale investment and change in this declining urban area; my experience led me to believe that incremental change led by multiple players was the best strategy to respond to the complexity of the Lea Valley and the diversity of its challenges. What actually unfolded was extraordinary: a dramatic process of large-scale change orchestrated by the London Mayor and backed by central government. As the Olympic project gained national attention and grew in strategic importance, so new vehicles were created and new appointments made to ensure that delivery could be guaranteed. The local partnerships were not strengthened and reinforced; they were replaced. Power shifted from the local to the centre. This created a tension between the centrally driven initiative to create the Olympic Park and deliver the Olympic Games and the collaborative style of working that had characterised much of the pre-existing regeneration activity in the Valley. Moreover, a commitment to dialogue had become a central feature of official planning and regeneration policy (this is explored in Chapter 2). This research

explores some aspects of the processes of dialogue and collaboration in the unusual context of a mega-project of national and international significance.

In 2006, my career moved on and I left the LDA. However, within five years I found myself working in the area once again, this time as a planning and economic development consultant. Concurrently I had embarked on a programme of study with Salford University School of the Built Environment working towards a professional doctorate. My return to professional engagement in the changing character of the Lower Lea Valley, now spanning the period during which the 2012 Olympic Games took place, combined with my new role as an academic, provided me with an opportunity to address unfinished business and explore some of the strategic issues I had experienced at first hand. While the government's attention had properly turned to securing a legacy from the 2012 Olympic Games, I set out to explore some of the questions that had challenged many who, like me, had engaged in the changing fortunes of this fascinating area of London and had entered into a romance with the area and its communities. Was the changing dynamic between so-called 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' planning an inevitable consequence of the decision to host the 2012 Olympic Games? Was central control of a project of such national strategic significance desirable as well as inevitable? In any case, how did the interplay between these different scales and styles of planning and intervention play out in practice? What can we learn from the experience? With these questions in mind, I set out on the doctoral research journey.

My masters-level dissertation completed in 2011 asked the question: Do collaborative planning methods help or hinder the progress of large-scale regeneration projects? I explored the dynamics in what are commonly referred to as 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' planning methods, as they played out in the development of the Lower Lea and the Olympic Park. Subjectively, I had made a link between the scale of the project and ambition and I wanted to argue for ambitious thinking. This loose and broadly defined personal sentiment did not help me identify a tightly defined research project. Failed attempts to narrow down the focus included a decision (early 2013) to study a community on the fringe of the Olympic Park. I contemplated adding a comparative dimension to the study with reference to China, where I had developed working links. All these proved to be distractions from my attention to a community I knew most

about and the knowledge I had to hand, namely the world of decision makers of which I had been a part, and to which I had returned in a minor way. The cumulative impact was to identify a practical, achievable research project resulted in me focusing more narrowly on an area of social life for which I had knowledge and ready access to people. Having narrowed my primary research field, I was able to adopt a longer time lens that captured the pre-Olympic time period when my personal involvement was intense.

1.3 Definition of key concepts used throughout the research

This section defines 3 concepts central to the research project: spatial planning, narrative and place narratives. My research is concerned with planning policy and planning regulation in the Lower Lea Valley, east London. This area of government policy and practice is referred to here as *spatial planning*. I am interested in *narrative* both as an object of study and also as a methodological approach. I focus specifically on narratives as an important component of spatial plans for the Lower Lea: on *place narratives*.

Spatial planning

Spatial planning can be understood as a process of place-making through the management of space and development. It is the development of plans and proposals in the form of policies and drawings, with the aim of creating better places, responding to the needs of society, the economy and the environment (Bartlett School of Planning, 2014). Spatial planning, on any scale beyond site specific developments, is usually led by the public sector, through processes that actively seek to engage wide sections of society through partnerships, collaborative working and public consultation. Even in cases where plans for developments are proposed for sites wholly owned by a landowner or developer, the government has, since the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, required the owner to seek planning permission for most development. Therefore, even in these instances, spatial planning is led by the public sector in the form of the designated planning authority. In this spirit, I focus on spatial planning as an activity led by the public sector, albeit with the active engagement of others, and expressed in the form of adopted plans and planning policies.

Narrative

I use narrative analysis as a methodological tool; this choice is described and justified in Chapter 4 below. The meanings of the terms narrative and story are interpreted in many ways (Riessman, 2008) and are frequently used interchangeably. In this research, I follow Roberts' (2002) definition drawn from Clandinin and Connelly (1994) and used by Ahmed (2012): 'Narrative relates to both a phenomenon and a method — the former can be termed a story . . . the latter narrative' (Roberts, 2002, p.117). In my research, the term 'story' is always used as a noun, for example I refer to stories about places. I sometimes use narrative as an alternative word for 'story', and do to emphasise between narrative as a method, the process of narrating, and the product, the narrative or the story.

Place narratives

References in the thesis to 'place narratives' are concerned with the work done to set out preferred futures of places in narrative forms, in the sense that plans construct and promote particular outcomes for a place. They are stories told by a narrator, and they reflect a particular vantage point. In this thesis, I use the terms 'place narratives' and 'narratives of place' interchangeably. Plans can be understood as a particular type of place narrative: they are official narratives in a formal/legal sense, providing the statutory basis for regulatory decisions, or in some cases providing contextual information in support of other statutory documents. Some planners choose to use storytelling as a tool or a method within the planning process (see Chapter 2). I am interested in the role of narrative in planning in the Lea Valley in a wider sense, namely that narratives are present in plans and in conversations in multiple ways, working both in the foreground and the background. These may be consciously crafted by planners and used as a communicative tool, but more often they are part of the assumed framework of meanings at play within planning discourse.

Drawing these definitions together, a narrative ethnography of spatial planning in the Lower Lea focuses on planning documents as place narratives about the way the Lower Lea is changing; I consider their role in planning and change in the study area. The term narrative is at the core of the object of my study: narrative describes one aspect of the method adopted in spatial planning practice (Sandercock, 1998).

Narrative also refers to the research method: I will pursue a narrative inquiry in order to interpret the data that I collect. Finally, my research is ethnographic in the sense that it is a study of people, in this case the people involved in planning within their natural setting. To do so, I collect data in the field and participate in the setting in order to collect data systematically and to seek to understand how people understand their world. I discuss my use of ethnographic methods in Chapter 4 (Research Methodology) and Chapter 5 (Methods).

1.4: The study context

In this section, I introduce and describe the study area. I refer to the area's past as a thriving industrial place linked that flourished in the Victorian period. I make brief reference to the government planning and regeneration efforts in the 1980s and 1990s, the period following the area's industrial decline and preceding the decision to locate the Olympic Park for the London 2012 Games in the Valley. I provide an outline sketch of the London decision to bid to host the 2012 Games and the consequences of that decision in reshaping the planning and regeneration of the area. I aim to provide sufficient detail to introduce the study area but avoid repetition with the main body of my research, which provides an account of the period 1995 to 2015, drawing on the interpretations of planning and regeneration in that period taken from the accounts of senior figures in local, regional and central government.

Figure 1
Lower Lea Valley Regeneration Area in
the context of the Greater London Metropolitan Boundary

Figure 1: Lower Lea Valley regeneration area

The Lower Lea Valley in east London (Figure 1) was once an industrial area, developed in the nineteenth century, serving as an industrial hinterland to London's docks and supplying goods and services to the city. Industrial decline and the closure of the docks had left a fragmented collection of waterways, urban relics, open spaces, dereliction and haphazard development (Lewis, 1999, 2001). The legacy of the once thriving industries in sectors such as chemicals, dyeing, tanneries, as well as food, metal and woodworking, was the heavy pollution of the land and the river with noxious chemicals (Clifford, 2017). By the 1990s some industry remained in the Valley, but much of it was low grade and a significant proportion of the activities enjoyed the hidden and unregulated and character of the area. The area's reputation as a place where some firms and individuals could operate on the margins of legality, was belied by the hidden presence of many reputable firms who struggled to resist the pressure to relocate away from the capital's high land values and labour costs (Davies, Davis & Rapp, 2017). The area was identified in the Government's Regional Planning Guidance for London as an area capable of accommodating significant new growth and development: RPG9a (Department of the Environment [DoE], 1995) and RPG3 (Government Office for London [GOL], 1996).

Prior to the decision to bid for the Olympic Games, redevelopment of the Lea Valley was taking place, but progress was uneven and its strategic direction uncertain and contested locally.

Figure 2:
The Olympic Park
in the Lower Lea Valley

Olympic Park (shaded area)

Lower Lea River Network

Lower Lea Valley Regeneration Area
(within black outline)

River Thames

4 miles approximate
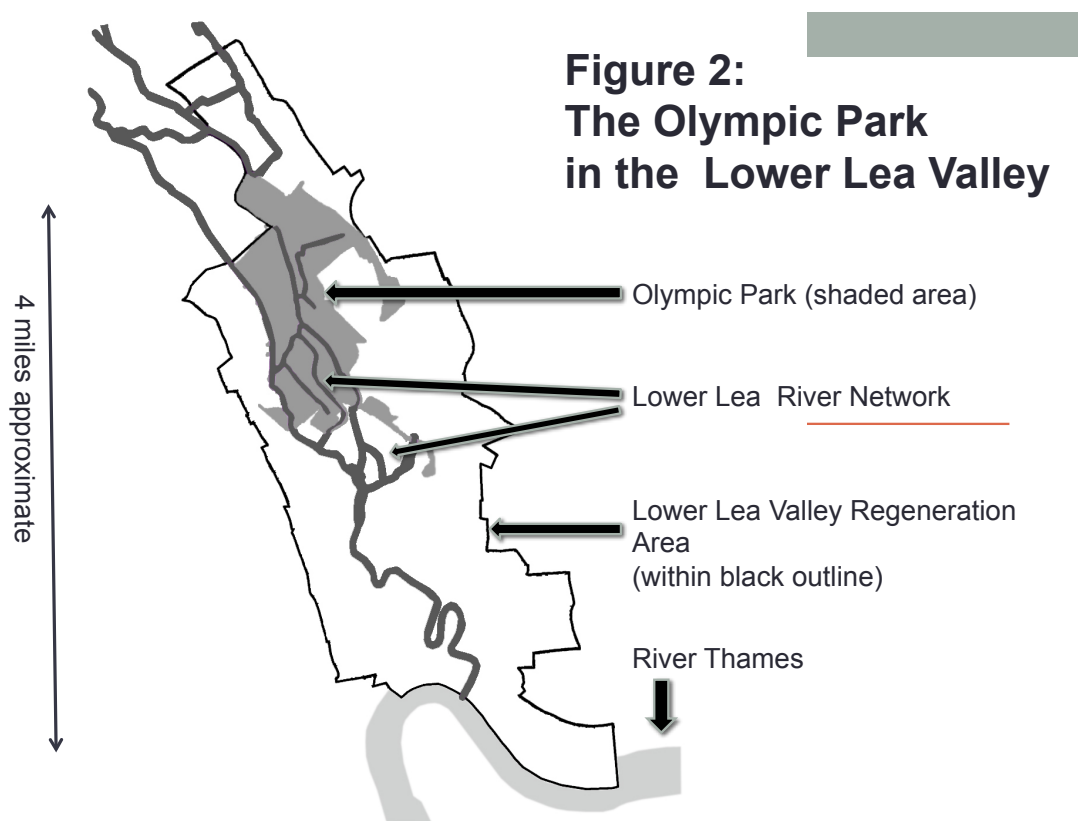
Figure 2: The study area

The study area is the Lower Lea Valley, including the QEOP and its fringe areas of Stratford, Hackney Wick, Bow and Poplar (see Figure 2). Here, planning policies, the market for development and expectations for change have all been affected by the realisation of the 2012 Olympics and its subsequent conversion for legacy uses into the QEOP. As well as the creation of parkland, the legacy use of the former Olympic Park will generate five new residential neighbourhoods and a number of commercial districts. Combined with the redevelopment of Stratford Rail Lands, these two long term initiatives are transforming the sites under their direct control and ownership, but also changing the development potential of the adjacent neighbourhoods. The

changing fortunes of the Valley, and its 'fringe areas', together form the focus of this doctoral research.

Established in 2012, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) has been granted planning powers and has some limited resources to invest in fringe areas that lie outside the core area of QEOP. Despite the LLDC's considerable planning and regeneration powers, change in these so-called fringe areas is taking place as a consequence of a number of wider factors. Land ownership is fragmented, and the investment and development markets have driven change in some places but not in others. Businesses, residents and others have established a range of uses, some of them long standing, and the established activities have given character to the localities (Design for London [DfL], 2013). Many planning and regeneration strategies have been pursued over the years. All of these have influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, the identity of the fringe areas, including the nature of the communities there, the informal boundaries that have been established and the economic and social life of the area.

Urban regeneration before the Olympic bid
In the 1990s, urban regeneration - actions to implement urban change - was overwhelmingly led by local authorities. Although increasingly a rhetoric of 'partnership' was promoted by government, linking the award of special resources for deprived areas from national programmes such as City Challenge, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Single Regeneration Budget to the creation of local partnerships that would coordinate local efforts and pool resources to complement government investment. These and other national investments were important sources of funding for local authorities around the Lower Lea Valley. European programmes, such as 'Objective 2' geared towards economic restructuring of areas suffering from industrial decline, were also important sources of funding for local projects in the Lea Valley. The funds typically flowed from central government departments such as the DoE (urban programmes) and the Department of Trade and Industry (European programmes); but GOL played a brokering role and was instrumental in awarding, directing and monitoring the allocation of government resources to local authorities and to local partnership programmes. Separately, English Partnerships (EP), the national agency created by the government to promote land assembly and

development, had a presence in London and was active in the wider area, notably in promoting development in Greenwich and in the Royal Docks, to the south and east of the Lea Valley. In the 1990s, the Lea Valley was designated as an area that would benefit from European Structural Funds. The programme was administered via GOL, who insisted on inter borough collaboration to deliver an economic development programme for an area that crossed a number of borough boundaries, including Tower Hamlets and Newham to the south, and also Hackney and Waltham Forest further northwards. Moreover, the mature development of Canary Wharf in London Docklands to the south, and the accelerating awareness of the scale of development at Stratford in the north east, begged the question of what should be the development strategy for the lands in between. A number of urban regeneration programmes were promoted in the area in the late 1990s with funding from government programmes including City Challenge, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Single Regeneration Budget. This era is described in Chapter 6.

The London Mayor and the Olympic bid

At the turn of the century, the GLA was formed, headed by an executive Mayor of London, with principal responsibility for strategic planning in the region. A 'family' of authorities with responsibilities for transport, fire and emergency services, policing and economic development were formed and made strategically accountable to the London Mayor. Within this, the LDA, a regional development agency created and funded by national government, was made accountable for its strategy and business plan to the London Mayor. It effectively became the Mayor's agency for business and jobs, giving him a substantial fund (£300m per year) to invest in initiatives tied to the city strategy that would be written into his strategic spatial plan: the London Plan. The creation of the GLA, backed by the LDA and Transport for London (TfL), was an essential step in creating the tools necessary to mount a city-scale project such as the Olympics.

Thus, the UK submission to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) contained 2 major commitments: that London would deliver a world-class Olympic and Paralympic Games, and that the Games would in turn deliver a lasting legacy. The commitment to legacy spoke to a national and regional imagination (such as health, sport and economic reconstruction), but locally a significant impact would be to

accelerate physical regeneration of the Lower Lea and the socio-economic regeneration of the deprived communities in the boroughs around the Park:

> By staging the Games in this part of the city, the most enduring legacy of the Olympics will be the regeneration of an entire community for the direct benefit of everyone who lives there (British Olympic Association [BOA], 2004, p.19).

In the context of the Lower Lea, this dual commitment, one to a major event with international significance, and the second to a development programme of city scale and local importance, created extraordinary challenges for governance, leadership and for local engagement (Vigor, Mean & Tims, 2004). Who should lead? How could delivery be assured? Should the programme be done to or with local communities? How could delivery be assured without disenfranchising local people?

Planning in the context of storytelling and the Lower Lea

> London does not end at the limits assigned to it by those acts of Parliament which take thought for the health of the Londoners. More suburbs shoot up, while official ink is drying. Really, there is no limit to London; but the law must needs assign bounds; and, by the law there is one suburb on the border of the Essex marshes which is quite cut off from the comforts of the Metropolitan Buildings Act; in fact, it lies just without its boundaries, and therefore is chosen as a place of refuge for offensive trade establishments turned out of the town, – those of oil boilers, gut spinners, varnish makers, printers ink makers and the like (Dickens, 1857).

By 1998, the Lea Valley, which had previously thrived as a Victorian conurbation of manufacturing and industrial innovation in the decades after Dickens wrote his damning essay 'Londoners over the Border', was once more home to a hidden economy in a district scarred by dereliction, pollution and neglect. Even though suburbanisation had long since driven London's boundaries further east, crossing the River Lea at Bow flyover in 1998 still carried some emotional resonance of neither being quite in, nor quite leaving London. Leaving the city at the Lea meant stepping away from Hackney's urban grit and the dense hamlets of Shoreditch, Whitechapel, Stepney and Wapping and into the anonymity of the suburbs of Forest Gate, Leytonstone and further to Barking, Dagenham and Redbridge. The industrial lands on the banks of the Lea were a barely noticeable interruption in the urban fabric when

seen from the windows of a car, tube train or railway carriage speeding beyond Mile End, Bromley-by-Bow and Poplar.

Despite its inauspicious beginnings, and conditions well suited to Dickens' macabre fascination with the lure of the city's underbelly, the absence of design had served the Lower Lea well. By the turn of the twentieth century the area was home to a burgeoning industrial sector, supporting innovation and production in sweets, plastics, petrochemicals and a range of goods that took advantage of the area's proximity to the docks and easy access to London's markets. Thus, in 1997, even though the vitality of former manufacturing glory of an area where plastics had been invented was still in evidence, and the urban hipster colony was barely foreshadowed, the lands hidden between the twists of the Bow Back Rivers and the several cuts of railways and roads, still welcomed entrepreneurs of all descriptions. Between the mountains of abandoned refrigerators, below the power lines, amid the Evangelist congregations, the dog track and the street market, a discrete but dynamic local economy was alive and well in the Lower Lea.

What type of planning had given birth to this urban condition? A modest development proposal on the edge of Stratford town centre, though unrealised in practice, perhaps offered a microscopic illustration of the strategy at play. In 1961, Architect Cedric Price had chosen a location as the perfect site for a 'Fun Palace', a project he proposed in collaboration with theatre director Joan Littlewood, who lived, worked and practiced at the nearby Theatre Royal Stratford. The Fun Palace project, a proposal for a flexible space capable of accommodating a radical form of theatre workshop, spoke to the haphazard freedoms of the wider district in which it would sit:

> Choose what you want to do – or watch someone else doing it. Learn how to handle tools, paint, babies, machinery, or just listen to your favourite tune. Dance, talk or be lifted up to where you can see how other people make things work. Sit out over space with a drink and tune in to what's happening elsewhere in the city. Try starting a riot or beginning a painting – or just lie back and stare at the sky (Price, 1961).

Later, in 1969, Price would collaborate with Paul Barker (writer), Reyner Banham (architectural historian) and Peter Hall (geographer and planner) to write an article in New Society magazine entitled 'Non-Plan' (Banham, Barker, Hall, & Price, 1969).

The Lea Valley was the child of Non-Plan. The absence of spatial planning was historically important in creating the conditions for industry to grow in the way it had. Beyond the London boundaries, to the east where prevailing winds would take away smells and emissions, hidden from view in the archipelago of land plots between road, rail and river twists, the strategy had prevailed in this area with some success. Abercrombie's 1944 Greater London Plan had recognised the importance of the Lower Lea Valley as an industrial location, via a broad-brush zonal designation, but beyond that there was no plan, and for most of a century industry thrived.

For the Lower Lea during the last decade of the twentieth century, the closure of the Docks, UK wide industrial decline and the flight of manufacturing out of London had left the area suffering from the scars of its barely regulated industrial past. The many thriving enterprises in the area traded well, despite the area's character rather than because of it. There are numerous examples of 'stories' set in and around the Lower Lea, based on history, fact and fiction. The 2005 drama documentary 'What have you done today, Mervyn Day' is based on a boy's paper-round: 'weaving around the various canals, channels, and gunged-up creeks, getting lost several times along the way' (Stanley, 2012). Several writers have been stimulated or provoked into writing about the area's rich local history and character, as well as the impact of the Olympics on the area. 'Ghost Milk: Calling Time on the Grand Project' by Iain Sinclair (2011) is one such book: an indictment of the Olympics and an excavation of the area's past. Neil Fraser's 'Over the Border' (2012) about Stratford and its people tells 'the story of the dreamers and the people caught up in those dreams'. John Rogers' 'This Other London: Adventures in the Overlooked City' (2013) includes explorations of the Lower Lea as the author 'ventures out into uncharted London...in search of the lost meaning of our Metropolitan existence'. William Mann's article 'Bastard Countryside' (2016) explores the relationship between town and countryside in the Lower Lea.

The Olympic and Olympic legacy projects have generated huge marketing and branding programmes, in part to promote the area to investors and also to secure public support. These might be understood as officially sponsored narratives (Olins, 2008). English Heritage published 'London's Lea Valley: The Olympic Park Story',

to capture 'a fascinating past that shaped the area, traces of which can still be seen' (Barson & Lewis, 2012).

By contrast, some groups have consciously sought to debunk or provide counter-narratives to the official stories, to defend businesses, activities and character threatened by change (Minton, 2012). Both official and counter- narratives draw on the many stories about the area to lend legitimacy to their versions of events and claims on the future.

I undertake an exploration of these documents and the circumstances in which they were produced, asking what role narrative plays in the process of planning. I seek to discover what cultural resources were drawn upon, to understand the ways in which stories were drawn up, how they developed and interacted with each other in the course of creating official narratives enshrined in the planning policies adopted by the Local Planning Authorities in the area.

1.5 Defining the research problem

In this section I outline how my experience as a professional practitioner shaped the research, showing how my experience led me to locate my work environment as the research field and to identify my research question based on my experiences. I had access as an insider to what was an undocumented field of professional practice. My experiences were drawn from my position in a newly established regional development agency, the LDA, faced with the challenge of delivering a mega-project, and the agency was seeking to come to terms very quickly with an area that was both a priority as a location that could accommodate London's growth, and because of the Olympic bid the world's eyes were on the unfolding story. In my research, I write about data available to me because I was in situ in the field, and so this led me to establishing an ethnographic study. I discuss this methodological choice and spell out its implications for my research in Chapters 4 and 5.

The LDA, on behalf of the Mayor of London, began to develop the bid to host the 2012 Games, and this necessitated the LDA to make an explicit link between the Games and urban regeneration. This was a legal obligation: the LDA's legal powers

meant it could invest in regeneration; the LDA could put resources into the Games bid insofar as it could argue that bidding, and perhaps winning, would promote regeneration. Secondly, the LDA had to make the Olympics-regeneration link to justify to the Mayor, the London boroughs and the wider public that the resources invested in the Games would bring benefits, not just to the UK and London economies, but also to east London and specifically to the Lea Valley. It was evident that the Games were linked to an urban regeneration narrative that would soon evolve into a legacy narrative. I witnessed how skilled narrators won hearts and minds both within the professional community of which I was a part, and also among the wider community of stakeholders and the public.

This was a moment when planners were involved in developing a strategic plan for London and were moving very fast to create a plan for the Lea Valley, while practical actions and projects that would shape the area were unfolding almost at a faster rate than the plans themselves. There was realpolitik about how planning ideas would contribute to place-making in this rapidly evolving context. It seemed to me that those planners, urban designers and the wider community of professionals and politicians, were effective insofar as they were able to use skills in the art and craft of dialogue, communication and strategies that helped build trust and consensus, or sometimes to steer a path through conflict. My research analyses how shared ideas evolved in this community of officials. While it was possible to spell out the formal rules and requirements of the planning process with reference to government guidance, in practice there seemed to be loose, informal ways of working in play that were nonetheless rigorous, dependent upon competence and engaged in meaning-making. It was as if a world of informality lay beneath or beyond the formal planning processes. I was focused on an official world made up of many disciplines and multiple agencies, with planning officials in the minority. This community was engaged in plan-making in action. Theirs was a world of crafting stories and managing competing stories.

I left the LDA in 2006, but by 2010 I was once again working in the field and also now pursuing my doctoral research. I repositioned myself as a researcher operating within a responsible ethical framework, so I could use my knowledge of the context and my access to documents and relationships with the individuals involved, and

thereby build my research project. My research starts from recognition of the competing cultures and contested ideas among colleagues about the nature of planning and its role in securing urban regeneration and change in the Lea Valley. The GLA/LDA has superimposed its own new strategy on a place where there were already powerful local institutions with their existing programmes and initiatives. I decided to focus my research on the ways different individuals and groups within the community of professionals promoted their ideas. There was a tacit understanding that different positions were being played out, yet, in this political and professional environment, contestation between narratives was not discussed in those terms. Simply, different stories were told depending on the perspective of the narrator, their interpretation of the place and their position within the institutional context. This recognition led me to choose to interpret the data using the methodological tools of narrative analysis.

I became interested in the concept of narrative and the role of narrative in planning and urban regeneration. Narrative analysis as a research practice is a diverse field. I made choices, discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, about the ways I would investigate the storied nature of the data before me, develop a framework for analysing the data and establish an approach to presenting my findings. These methodological choices had to be relevant to the problems I was seeking to explore. In my own role, as a Head of Service at the LDA, I was involved in managing work, building relationships and making decisions as well as taking orders and representing the institution. Some contributions and outlooks seemed to me to be undervalued. Some people around me I found to be inspirational: they were sources of insights into the nature of the Lea Valley and imaginative about its potential and prospects; some were not in formal positions of power or authority, yet they were, in my estimation, playing an important role in the unfolding processes. My research set out to create a narrative, told from an insider perspective, of how these processes of regeneration and place-making unfolded. Through this research, I have encouraged people who played leading to tell their stories; I have captured interpretations from the stories they told and interpreted those stories from my own perspective. My position as a professional practitioner shapes my ability to be interpretive and shapes my interpretation. In turn, this shapes the kind of knowledge this research generates.

I set out to substantiate my perception that there was a gap in knowledge that I could fill through this research, through my literature search. There were 2 lines of enquiry arising from my research focus: the role of narrative and dialogue in spatial planning and urban regeneration, and the impact of a mega project, the Olympics, on place-making. These two dimensions of the literature search are documented in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively.

Leonie Sandercock (2003) says that for many planning practitioners, the role of story is central, although not always consciously so (Sandercock, 2003, p.186). She argues that storytelling is an important tool for planners. Many planners engage in storytelling, and 'those that do so consciously do so in diverse, often imaginative ways' (Sandercock, 2003, p.186). I describe and analyse the development of ideas about the future of the area as a particular kind of *narrative:* borrowing from the schema of stories - recognisable themes developing in time in the form of a plot, set in a scene, with characters in recognisable roles, storytellers and audiences. I explore the use of narrative both as a means of understanding an important aspect of social reality and also as method of inquiry. I draw on the concept of narrative in 3 principal ways. Firstly, I use narrative inquiry as a method for exploring the research problem and secondly, I seek to identify in what ways narrative processes, i.e. the development and telling of stories, have featured in the planning processes in this case. Finally, I seek to identify and analyse a number of phenomena that might be termed 'place narratives': stories that have been developed in the form of official plans, or stories that have gained ground as alternative unofficial accounts, of the past, present and future of this changing part of London.

I found that there was an extensive body of planning theory concerned with the communicative dimensions of planning, linked to the emergence of a distinctive approach to planning practice over 3 decades. Within this, I noted general calls from practitioners and theorists for more case studies to address the role of narrative in planning (see Chapter 2). I identified a tendency within this body of theory and practice to focus, with obvious value, on the interface between planning policy makers and their relationships with other stakeholders and the wider public. By contrast, my research is concerned with narrative and dialogue as phenomena within the internal community of policy makers and officials. This aspect of planning

practice is firmly recognised as a dimension of planning by leading theorists concerned with planning as communicative action (see Chapter 2); however, the fact that I could not find many case studies from professional practice focused in this way gave me the gap in knowledge to which I could contribute.

Turning to Olympic legacy, my literature search (in Chapter 3) led me to a similar conclusion, namely that there was space for further exploration of the processes at play inside the community of officials engaged in the Valley. At the time I started my research, there was research concerned with the 2012 Olympics; now there is an extensive and diverse body of work. However, my own research is distinctive in the following 2 ways. Firstly, I choose a time period that starts before the Olympic project was conceived; in this way I do not fetishize the Olympics by treating it as if it were a 'ground zero' project. My research sets out to explore how the Olympic project drew upon, distorted or ignored the pre-existing regeneration narratives for the area, and indeed the extent to which the older narratives reasserted themselves once 2012 was over. As my review of Olympic legacy research demonstrated, my approach of adopting a longer time-frame is not unique, but I contribute to what is a relatively small group of researchers interested in Olympic legacy who challenge the tendency to treat the Games and its impact on the area as a singular phenomenon, and to pay greater attention to context. Secondly, there are now some published research reports that also make use of ethnographic data gathered from inside the community of officials. My own work is distinctive in its contribution because I ask different questions (by focusing specifically on the evolution of place-making narratives in the period leading up to the publication of the definitive 'Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework' (GLA, 2007), and also because of my access to data and sensitivity to the processes at play from the time period 1998 to 2006. That said, my own work is a very modest contribution to some of the now published studies that are, for me, exemplary models of good practice and great sources of learning.

1.6 The aim and objectives of the study

The aim of my research is to examine how place narratives shape processes of spatial planning and regeneration in the Lower Lea Valley.

My research objectives are to:

1. Explore the use of narratives in processes of spatial planning and regeneration in the Lower Lea Valley in east London and describe how these narratives have influenced decision makers;

2. Analyse a number of the principal planning policy documents for the Lower Lea between 1995 and 2015 (see Appendix 1), and provide a narrative of how themes within them develop, interact, evolve and change;

3. By interviewing a sample of twenty-five people involved in processes of planning and development in the Lower Lea, explore the accounts of their experiences of how place narratives were constructed and how decisions were made within these processes during this time frame;

4. Spend time as a participant and observer in the locality and the context in which plans are produced, gathering evidence about the setting for spatial planning in the Lower Lea;

5. Examine how structural contexts including institutions, cultures and practices shaped the development of the Lower Lea and;

6. Explore how people involved in planning and development act within these structures.

1.7 Thesis structure

The overall structure of the thesis is comprised of eleven chapters in the following structure, presented together with supporting referencing, bibliography and appendices:

Chapter 1 provides the background and the wider context of the research. The chapter introduces the key concepts used, and the overall aim and objectives of the thesis. Finally, a summary of each chapter is included.

In **Chapter 2**, I review the emergence of collaborative planning as the dominant mode of conceptualising planning practice today. Within this, Anthony Giddens' concept of structuration and Habermas' theory of communicative action are identified as centrally important meta-theories that provide the foundations for subsequent theories of collaborative planning. From this theoretical review, I identify the conceptual

framework that supports this research and I summarise this in the concluding section of Chapter 2. **Chapter 3** is a review of the extensive body of literature that addresses the claims made by officials that the Games would deliver a lasting legacy for east London.

In **Chapter 4**, I set out the methodology for the research. My methodology is grounded in an interpretive epistemology based on the assumption that social life is constructed by the interaction of actors, and that social structures set a context that allow for freedom of choice for individuals and groups. Giddens' concept of structuration is identified as the conceptual framework that I will draw upon to account for the assumed dynamic interaction between the freedom for action and the constraints imposed by structures. I explain and justify my choice of narrative ethnography for the research methodology, linking to the interpretive epistemology. In **Chapter 5**, I define my research methods.

I set out my research findings in **Chapters 6 to 9**. I tell a story of how planning and regeneration evolved over four chronological periods, thereby using time as the primary means to organise the presentation of my findings in the form of a narrative. I present my findings within each time period by drawing on an analysis of 3 elements: place, authorship and counter-narrative. I discuss how each of these elements were narratively constructed within each period. **Between 1995 and 2002**, the Lea Valley was narratively constructed as a derelict, poisoned place. Authors write a new script, a counter-narrative, presenting the Valley as a place of opportunity. **Between 2002 and 2007**, authorship of the plans for the Valley shifted to the regional level of government, and the Valley was constructed as the home of the 2012 Games, synonymous with its casting as a place to accommodate London's growth. The tension between 2 themes: 'Olympics' and 'Regeneration' was resolved narratively in the strategic plan adopted in 2007 (GLA). **Between 2007 and 2012**, in the mature phase of planning the Olympics, authorship passed from Labour Mayor of London Ken Livingstone to Conservative Boris Johnson, though the narrative for the Lea Valley survived the political change in leadership. The plans resolved opposition between 'London Growth' and 'East London Deprivation' through the development of a narrative around 'Games Legacy'. **The period after 2012**, beyond the Games, became a time for reflection on the Park and its development. In **Chapter 10** I review

the relationship between my findings and Giddens' concept of structuration. I discuss how structure and agency are intertwined in these periods and consider how narratives play a part in the transference and evolution over time of 'stocks of knowledge' (Schutz, 1932). I present my conclusions in **Chapter 11**.

CHAPTER 2: COLLABORATIVE PLANNING THEORY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I review the theoretical ideas and assumptions that underpin collaborative planning practice and identify some concepts upon which this theory rests: the idea of communicative action as developed in the philosophical writing of Habermas (1984) and the concept of structuration from Giddens and his sociology of structure and agency (1984). I acknowledge that the analysis in my thesis makes considerable use made of ideas drawn from planning theorist Patsy Healey. This chapter concludes with a summary account of concepts I take forward and use to analyse the findings of my research.

In 2.2 below, I provide a definition of collaborative planning and summarise its main features. In Section 2.3, I provide a sketch of the theory of collaborative planning and discuss the place of narrative within theories and practice of collaborative planning. In Section 2.4, I draw out some important social theories, as previously mentioned, that stand as the underpinnings of this theoretical framework; and in Section 2.5 I explore the centrality of narrative to theories and practice of collaborative planning. In Section 2.6, I review a number of critical challenges to the efficacy of collaborative planning theory. From this theoretical review, I establish in Section 2.7 a number of concepts that I draw upon in my analysis of the research project.

2.2 Defining collaborative planning

Collaborative planning emerged as a distinctive current in planning in the late twentieth century, when it had become unpopular to plan 'for' people; rather, a radical sentiment gained ground whereby planners would seek to side with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised: planners increasingly sought to work collaboratively and plan 'with' the public (Klosterman, 1998). Collaborative planning as 'an inclusive dialogic approach to shaping social space' (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p.284) became a popular way to characterise the nature of planning, alongside longer standing rational-technical perspectives (Healey, 2006, p27-30). Collaborative planning theory has become the 'dominant position as one of the main paradigms of and for a twenty-first

century planning' (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). Collaborative planning is a broad description, with many diverse theoretical positions held by its proponents (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002); this diversity is acknowledged, although I consider some broad shared principles.

In its most literal sense, planning is concerned with fashioning the built environment (Taylor, 1998) and in modern society this is achieved through the operation of rules and laws concerning the ordering of development. Collaborative planners interpret this practice in a particular way. They start from the position that planning is 'a means of shaping culture and society in the course of shaping places' (Healey, 2007), and argue that planners should be concerned first and foremost with the social interactions that surround this activity. This approach is distinguishable from alternative planning perspectives in that it draws attention to planning as a process based first and foremost on interactions between people and groups. Consider the 2 definitions that follow: the first, a quote from modernist architect Le Corbusier, puts the focus on the plan itself, while the second, a statement from European Ministers, puts the emphasis on the administrative policy:

> The plan is the generator. Without plan, you have lack of order and wilfulness. The plan holds in itself the essence of sensation. The great problems of tomorrow, dictated by collective necessities, put the question of 'plan' in a new form. Modern life demands, and is waiting for, a new kind of plan, both for the house and for the city (Le Corbusier, 1923, pp.2-3).

> Regional/spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and a policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach directed towards a balanced regional development and the physical organisation of space according to an overall strategy (European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning [CEMAT], 1983).

In each of these examples planning has a social purpose embodied, respectively, in the plan itself and in government policy. Collaborative planners also consider plans and policies to be expressions of social purpose. By contrast, however, they focus on how different sections of society can come to agreement on just what should go into those plans and policies:

A good decision would be one derived from inclusionary argumentation, made in the expectation that good reasons, based in inclusionary processes of collaborative discussion, could be given for it if challenged (Healey, 2006, p.238).

Collaborative planners play close attention to the relationships between the many social actors with interests in the development process: landowners, builders, developers and investors; future occupiers of buildings and the wider public that will live, work, and recreate in the places that are shaped by planning.

Patsy Healey puts forward 3 criteria for successful planning: firstly (and in common with planning in the past) the delivery of outcomes in the form of social economic and environmental objectives; secondly the success in engaging stakeholders; and thirdly the generation of social and intellectual capital in the form of culture, and links between cultures attached to the qualities of place (Healey, 1997). I note that 2 of these measures of success address relations and process, as distinct from the organisation of things. This notion of planner as relationship-builder and process-facilitator is captured in this 2008 statement of government planning policy:

The [new] *spatial planning* system exists to deliver positive social, economic and environmental outcomes, and requires planners to collaborate actively with the wide range of stakeholders and agencies that help to shape local areas and deliver local services (Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG], 2008, p.3).

2.3 The theory of collaborative planning

In this section, I identify some features of collaborative planning theory; this outlook is situated within a broader field of theory that rejects the assumptions of modernism. I then highlight the ways collaborative planners place particular emphasis on the task of shaping culture. In pursuit of this general concern with shaping culture as a means to shape places, I outline the collaborative planners' interests in interventions that strengthen governance, improve dialogue and facilitate politics. Finally, I draw attention to the analytic tool of institutional analysis, promoted by a leading collaborative planner, Patsy Healey.

Challenges to planning's claim to scientific objectivity

By the 1960s, town-planning came to be viewed as a science, concerned with the control of processes, complex, dynamic social systems, rather than as an art form concerned with the aesthetic issues of urban design. Since then, the totalising narrative of positivism within planning has been challenged on many grounds, including its failure to respond to social complexity (Jacobs, 1961) and its inability to address questions of political power (Forester, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 1998). Sandercock (2003) criticises the failure of modernist planning, with its claims to scientific objectivity, to address its boundedness and acknowledge its value-laden nature. Matters of political choice and power, the critics assert, are presented in and through planning as though they are technical matters. These critical perspectives together represent a rejection of the core claim that planning is an objective, scientific pursuit.

Collaborative planning is arguably the dominant theoretical outlook that emerges in the context of the growing post-positivist intellectual climate of the last decades of the twentieth century (Allmendinger, 2002). That said, it would be wrong to suggest that collaborative planning represents a unified and universally endorsed alternative to scientific rationality. If planning practice is diffuse, with technocratic planning overlaid by other strategies, then planning theory is also fragmented, drawing on diverse currents including theories of postmodernism, neo-pragmatism, and collaborative planning or communicative action (Allmendinger, 2005). Moreover, leading proponents of collaborative planning theory argue that different theoretical positions, including technical-rational planning, can happily coexist. Sandercock (2003) deploys the term 'Mongrel Cities' to advocate a hybrid approach to planning, in which participatory planning plays a part in the democratic process, living happily alongside means-ends rationality where appropriate, notably in producing technical engineering solutions. Healey also takes this view, acknowledging the importance in planning of tools based on scientific rationalism, for example in economic evaluation, while arguing for a new approach based on the invention of new forms and practices for planning:

> …if its invention is based on an inclusionary ethic, its form should allow both voice and influence to be more evenly distributed among those with a stake in issues than is common in most strategic planning exercises these days (Healey, 2006, p.282).

Planning as a contribution to building culture

Patsy Healey makes the case for planning that is focused on *inter-subjective reasoning among diverse discourse communities* (Healey, 1992), geared to building consensus around shared meanings and objectives through the course of planning activity. Healey persuasively argues that planning should be concerned with the objective of link making, offering the scope to engage diverse cultures – identifying the various 'layers' of social life and the cultures attached to them and drawing them into the process of place shaping. Planning, from this perspective, is concerned with shaping culture and society. Culture, for Healey (2006, p.64) is 'the continuously re-shaped product of the social processes through which systems of meaning and thought are generated' and local environmental planning 'becomes a project in the formation and transmission of cultural layers'.

Healey thus defines culture in a radically different way from the modernists, who saw culture as a social sphere separate from the economic and political realms (Healey 2006, pp.8-30). Linked to this overarching framework, collaborative planners bring certain perspectives to understanding how dialogue proceeds between stakeholders. Propositions, it is suggested, are developed in a non-linear way, through iterations arising from a dialogic process. The process typically includes elements such as working to build trust, securing common understanding among participants, and engaging people in decision making on an equitable basis (Innes & Booher, 2010).

Collaborative planning as a tool for strengthening governance capacity

Seen this way, planning provides a tool that can be used to strengthen governance capacity (Innes & Booher, 2003). Patsy Healey distinguishes between those who see planning as a bureaucratic impediment and those who:

> …see planning systems and practices as a mechanism through which to engage the complex balancing of economic, social and environmental values in a coordinated and integrated way … part of the institutional infrastructure necessary for economically successful, liveable, environmentally considerate and socially just urban areas (2007, p.6).

Healey's normative position is explicit: planning processes offer individuals and groups a means to participate and work towards a better society and a better world. If

planning, as Innes and Booher propose, offers tools for 'strengthening governance', this need not be read straightforwardly as a means of strengthening the official narratives of public policy. Indeed, some (Forester, 1989; Sandercock, 1998, 2003) argue that planning provides scope for political contestation. John Forester (1989) had argued that planning could reinforce economic domination, by using selective information and the spreading of disinformation (Forester, 1989, p.45). However, Forester suggested that 'progressive' planning offered the scope to be 'at once a democratizing and a practical organizing process' (Forester, 1989, p.49). Thus, Leonie Sandercock asserts that 'planning practices have always been deeply interested rather than disinterested, deeply implicated in politics and in communicative acts' (2003, p.33).

Collaborative planning as a dialogic activity capable of redressing power

Why should the activity of engaging the public be any better at providing solutions to urban problems than what went before? Prime facie, one might consider that engagement would offer fine-grained insights capable of informing plan making, thereby enabling urban design to better respond to public needs and aspirations. However, collaborative planners suggest there is a more profound reason why their methods make good sense. The answer, for them, lies in the distinctive approach to power embodied in the practice. Tore Sager provides an illuminating definition for 'communicative planning' thus:

> Making planning processes less vulnerable to manipulation and other repressive power strategies by revealing and counteracting communicative distortions. Aiming for broad participation and dialogue in planning processes and broad support for planning recommendations (2005, p.2).

This definition expresses an idea at the core of the case for collaborative planning, namely that the act and quality of communication is critical to building a good society. Planning is understood as a process of dialogue between sections of a community, wherein the quality of the communication can affect the exercise of power and ability to secure desirable outcomes such as justness and equity. Sager (2005), situates the normative practice of communicative planning within the broader framework of planning as a pursuit of democracy. He contends that planning theory is normative in the sense that it is concerned with the promotion of democracy, and that

it develops and changes as a practice develops as democracy is itself becomes more mature.

Institutional analysis

Patsy Healey proposes that a certain analytical approach, institutional analysis (2006, pp. 31 – 71), is appropriate for developing knowledge about places: a methodology that considers the nature and practice of agencies engaged in a social situation, the formal and the informal norms of behaviour and routines of practice embedded in particular histories and geographies. Institutional analysis seeks to provide a framework for analysing the processes central to the activity of successful planning: those that engage diverse communities in making decisions about the future of places, based on the development of consensus through engagement and dialogue with stakeholders. Institutional analysis is an analytic tool; the term is associated with the objective of study (institutions), and the focus for the normative dimension of collaborative planning (improving institutions). Planning, for Healey, should help build the 'institutional capacity' of a place, understood as a concern with the recognition and building of place-culture. Planning is thus concerned with relations, or social dynamics associated with places. On the one hand the concern is with the 'embedded' culture of traditions, practices and meanings that are given, but also with the issues attached to their interaction as well as the potential to generate culture in the course of place shaping.

2.4 Meta theories in collaborative planning

Collaborative planning theory might be understood as 'middle-range' theory (Merton, 1957), standing at the mid-point between the practice of planning and broader sociological theories. Two broader social and political theories that collaborative planners draw upon are identified: Habermas' theory of communicative action and Giddens' theory of structuration.

From Section 2.3 above, it can be seen that collaborative planning theories assume that planners act within a world of inter-subjective reasoning. Planners are concerned with culture, Patsy Healey tells us, understood as a product of social processes. Social processes generate systems of meaning and thought, and these appear to us as culture.

However, culture is not a static product but one that is continuously reshaped. Moreover, culture is not passively reflected in plans and planning processes. Planners are implicated in politics, in communicative acts; they play a part of the process of continuously reshaping culture. Unlike technical-rationalist planning, collaborative planning acknowledges the social context within which meanings are generated. Planners are obliged to aim for broad participation and dialogue to 'reveal and counteract communicative distortions' (Sager, 2005). These claims draw upon and express concepts drawn from the social and political theories of Jurgen Habermas and Anthony Giddens.

Habermas

The notions that planners are 'implicated in communicative acts' and should work to 'reveal and counteract communicative distortions' are taken directly from Jurgen Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action, whereby meanings are generated through inter-subjective reasoning. Habermas focuses on the qualitative and interpretive dimensions of knowledge, emphasising the role that public dialogue plays in the interpretive process. Published in 1981, this treatise is welcomed by a growing audience of planners who are increasingly keen to challenge the rationalist paradigm in planning, to find a theoretical justification for their practical engagement with politics, and their engagement, talking and listening, with communities who are evidently experiencing inequality in the face of power (Forester, 1989; Throgmorton, 1991).

Cultures and structures through which we make sense of the world are formed and transformed through our communicative efforts (Healey, 2006, p.50). Moreover, given that we make meaning inter-subjectively, collective dialogue offers the possibility for social transformation. Habermas defines communicative rationality as 'oriented to achieving, sustaining and reviewing consensus' - and indeed a consensus that rests on the inter-subjective recognition of criticisable validity claims (Habermas, 1984, p.27). Habermas, says Healey, 'provides a rich stream of ideas about how to reconstitute the public realm through open, public debate' (Healey, 2006, p.49).

For Habermas, ideal communication is predicated on principles of equality and trust between participants in a dialogue. Power distorts the conditions within which mutual

understanding can flourish. Creating the conditions for good communication and collective agreement is essential for social progress. In collaborative planning theory, this general proposition about the relationship between communication and a better society is applied to the sphere of planning. Hence the planner takes responsibility for the quality of communication and takes steps to create the ideal conditions for engaged communication, seeking to remove or mitigate the distortions that may arise from unequal access to power and information.

Giddens

If Habermas provides a conceptual framework that places dialogue at the centre of the interpretive practice of planning, Anthony Giddens offers the conceptual means to overcome the dualism between structure and agency. Giddens pursues 'a conceptual investigation of the nature of human action, social institutions and the inter-relations between actions and institutions' (1991, p.201). Giddens conceives of a dynamic inter-relationship between a person's capacity to act and shape the world, and the contextual circumstances that provide both constraints and opportunities for action. For Giddens, structure and agency are bound up with each other. On the one hand, people actively shape their circumstances (agency) and, on the other hand social circumstances such as history, geography, institutional arrangements and even modes of thought constrain the opportunities for social autonomy (structures). 'Structuration' is the term Giddens uses to refer to the mutual, ongoing relationship between these two dimensions in which each aspect of structure and agency is implicated in the other.

Giddens echoes Karl Marx's general proposition that 'man makes history, though not in circumstances of his choosing'. However, Giddens qualifies the proposition by emphasising the ways in which structures are actively constituted through our actions. In this sense, structuring is 'inside ourselves' (Healey, 2006, p.46). He draws our attention to 'the way in which social activities regularly reconstitute the circumstances that gave rise to them in the first place'. Given this dynamic inter-relationship, 'Social systems have structural properties, says Giddens, but they are not, as such, structures' (Giddens, 1991, p.203).

Healey draws on Giddens' concern with 'active agency in the power of structures' when she defines culture as 'the continuously reshaped product of social processes through which systems of meaning and thought are generated'. For Giddens, social forces impose structure on social relationships; the forces providing the context within which people actively and interactively construct their lives. These forces bring to any given social context 'implicit and explicit imperatives for how things should be done' (Healey, 2006, p. 45); they also express power relationships that are reproduced over time. Structures, institutions, power relationships and systems of meaning may appear to exist independently of human agency in a given situation, but actually they are the product of human action, albeit often from another social situation.

Together, Giddens and Habermas provide the theoretical building blocks for collaborative planning. Giddens contributes a means to conceptualise active agency in the power of structures; Habermas contributes a framework concerned with collective dialogue and a concern with addressing the distorting impact of power on ideal communication. On this basis, collaborative planning is conceived as 'processes of intersubjective communication in the public sphere, through which dynamic mutual learning takes place' (Healey, 2006, p.55) that aspire to transform the public realm and to change structuring forces.

2.5 Narrative in collaborative planning

Collaborative planners suggest that technical-rational approaches, whereby goals are identified and analysis determines the optimum means of getting there, fail to capture important dimensions of the planning process. They propose that planning, or spatial strategy making (Healey, 2007) must involve other kinds of rationality that is capable of engaging with ethics and emotions. Rationality in planning must be capable of responding to how knowledge is negotiated and shared inter-subjectively, and how politics and power play a part in the development of plans. For collaborative planners, this poses a challenge about the kinds of process that can be capable of enabling 'inclusionary argumentation' (Healey, 2007, p.253). Drawing on Habermas, collaborative planners are interested in 'how people's conceptions of their preferences are communicatively and interactively constructed' (Healey, 2007, p.253). Further, following Giddens, collaborative planners focus on the active inter-relationship of

structuring forces and agency. Applying this outlook to the task of plan-making, planners and other actors in the planning process cannot help but bring the outside world, in the form of frames of reference such as their socio-cultural understandings, professional knowledge and other institutional factors, into the plan-making process (Healey, 2007, p.253). The challenge is how to construct the interactive processes necessary for planning that make possible 'inclusionary argumentation' (Healey, 2007, p.263).

Mareile Walter (2013, p.18) surveys the use of place-based narratives in urban development, as part of her thesis on narratives in planning, studied in a Swedish setting. She quotes Hague (2005, p.8): 'A key purpose of planning is to create, reproduce or mould the identities of places through manipulation of activities, feelings, meanings and fabric that combine into place identity.' Walter identifies planning as one important medium, among others, through which urban development and promotional activities such as place marketing, strengthening place identity all combine to attract capital, and support regional development ambitions. Walter draws on Mandelbaum (1990), who advocates that planning documents should be read as narratives (Walter, 2013, p.18) as well as policy claims and responses to design opportunities. In addition to assessing the plan in its own terms, its coherence as a policy that might be expected to secure a given end, or to deliver a good design solution appropriate to a problem, Mandelbaum suggests that plans as narratives can be analysed interpretively. He proposes that it should be considered, for example, how a plan constructs both the ideal author and the ideal reader, or how plans reflect and construct context: especially exploring how uncertainties and ambiguities relate to complexity of the world (Walter, 2013, p.19).

If planning is an inter-subjective activity of constructing meanings in planning settings (Fischer, 2003), it follows interpretive approaches to analysing planning are appropriate. Narrative analysis offers tools for analysing the discursive processes at play. Stories are told by narrators; meaning is constructed by the way the story is told, the language that is used, the way the power relations and other contextual factors are both reflected in, constructed by, the narrative. For example, Healey characterises the activity of regional spatial strategy making as one of 'summoning up' the urban region, bringing into being a way of seeing the place by framing and naming its

attributes. She describes the process as one of creative discovery as well as an activity of systematised learning. She uses narrative to account for these processes, using chronology, historical narrative and the capacity of story to convey 'thick description' (Healey, 2007, pp.20-25).

Leonie Sandercock (2003) advocates the use of story as a good tool in collaborative planning, both as a way of analysing the process, and of the use of stories to facilitate process. She describes planning as 'performed story' (2003, p.186). Stories, she argues, are useful in diverse ways throughout planning including: storytelling as a tool for community participation, mediation and negotiation, securing intercultural collaboration, the use of 'core story' to give meaning to collective life, the construction of preferred futures as a tool in scenario analysis (2003, pp.186-191). Stories and storytelling can be powerful agents in helping giving shape to imagined alternative futures for a place (2003, p. 192). Planners are persuasive storytellers, and the act of storytelling in planning is constitutive of the future of places (Throgmorton, 2003). Sandercock concludes her chapter in 'Mongrel Cities' (2003) in which she draws attention to the centrality of storytelling in planning with a call for 'a better understanding of the work that story does, or can do, and how it does it' to produce more persuasive plans and policy documents (2003, p.204).

2.6 Critical challenges to collaborative planning

Brand and Gaffikin (2007) note that there is a range of meanings ascribed to the category of collaborative planning. These include: a form of planning (Harris, 2002, p.23), an emerging paradigm in planning (Innes & Booher, 2010) and a worldview (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). Communicative planning theory 'can be all things to all people and thereby difficult to critique' (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p. 285). Three main challenges are outlined below.

Undermining decisions based on scientific and rational analysis
Dan Murray (2005) carried out a review of case studies in which he identified a number of critical challenges to the practice of communicative planning, relating the practice to his own field of environmental resource management. Problems, he suggests, can arise from a focus on process (the dialogue) rather than on the content

(the end result). Consensus established through collaboration can lack specificity about goals. He concludes that communicative planning, given its focus on communication and negotiation among stakeholders, tends to undermine decision-making based on scientific-rational principles.

The role that power plays in shaping outcomes

It is unsurprising that the competing sociological approaches of Foucault and Habermas, and their respective concerns with power and consensus building through communication, should find expression in the debates about planning theory. Flyvbjerg and Richardson are among those who take the position that Habermas' theory is problematic 'because it hampers an understanding of how power shapes planning' (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002). They argue that Habermas' approach is idealistic in that it focuses on how the social world ought to be and does not adequately address the reality of the social world, and specifically that Habermas fails to capture the reality of the operation of power in society. Their critique of Habermas centres on his concept of an 'ideal free speech situation', which is just that – ideal, utopian and removed from the substantive operation of discourse in the real world. The basic weakness of Habermas' project is its lack of agreement between ideal and reality, between intentions and their implementation, and is rooted in an insufficient conception of power.

An apologetic political project

Collaborative planning is considered by some to be a reaction to the neo-liberal market challenges to planning of the 1980s (Allmendinger & Tewdwr Jones, 2002, p.14). In the context of globalisation, governments are less able to assert control at the local level, so planners are involved in acts of compromise and moral choice in their negotiations with footloose developers. Planning, from this point of view, is an exercise in the art of negotiation and trade-off (Bengs, 2005). From this view, collaborative planning sits within the trajectory of new managerialism and the political project of modernising government. Some read this positively. For example, Allmendinger argues that collaborative planning is a means to make a case for the continued role of the planner in the wider context of the deregulation in the 1980s and 1990s. Others read this relationship negatively, perceiving communicative planning to

be a 'powerful conception in legitimising a managerialist approach to the problems confronting a planner' (Imrie, 1999, p.119).

Bengs points to the degraded character of political community implicit in the change from the concept of the citizen to the stakeholder. The political community in collaborative planning theory, he notes, is not the formal constituency of the electorate, but rather an informal constellation of voices actual and potential that may be engaged in a place or a project. Bengs suggests that this orientation within collaborative planning is well suited to the need to establish neo-liberal institutions compatible with the global free-flow of investment and development (Bengs, 2005, p.7).

2.7 Discursive institutionalism

Schmidt (2008) explores the concept of 'discursive institutionalism', establishing it as a more dynamic approach to understanding institutional change compared with previous approaches to institutional analysis. She differentiates between 2 forms of discourse: first, coordinative discourse among policy actors, and second, communicative discourse between political actors and the public (Schmidt, 2008, p.303). Applying this distinction to my own research, I focus on 'coordinative discourse' among policy actors. Schmidt, in a similar fashion to Giddens, argues that 'discursive institutions are simultaneously structures and constructs. Unpacking the 2 sides of this equation, Schmidt explores how agents in discursive institutions bring 'background ideational abilities' into play 'within a given "meaning context"' (Schmidt, 2008, p.303). In my analysis, I seek out 'stocks of knowledge' (Schutz, 1932; Giddens, 1984, 1991). Reading Schmidt's essay helped me consider how 'stocks of knowledge' might be analysed in ways that are sensitive to the dynamic interactions of an institutional context. This connects with Giddens' idea of 'mutual knowledge' shared among actors in a particular social context.

2.8 Urban mentality

I draw on Nora Plesske's (2014) model of 'urban mentality' as an overarching way of thinking about ideas and meanings through which the character of a place can be

constructed. In the discussion of my findings in Chapter 11, I use the concept of urban mentality as a way to draw together the various strands of my analysis. Plesske identifies ways in which a 'London mentality' is structured in her reading of contemporary London novels. I seek to transpose her broad categories and apply them to my reading of policies and the stories of the development of policies. Plesske differentiates between 'ideology', a frame of mind that is consciously constructed, and 'mentalities' which are assumed or less consciously formulated frameworks through which we make sense of the world. This appears to link to Giddens' concept of 'locale', carrying a sense of place understood as a social construct.

In applying this way of thinking to cities in general and London in particular, Plesske distinguishes between an 'urban-general' mentality, or those ways of conceiving of generic features of cities and urban life, and 'urban-specific' mentality, in this case those idiosyncratic features that are linked to a specific place and time. This starting point gives me an especially useful way of thinking about ideas of London during the time period of my study, and then about the features of place (the Lower Lea Valley) within the framework of ideas about London.

From the perspective of narrative, this viewpoint invites me to explore the narratives of metropolitan and urban life in general, of London as a whole - its growth and change during the period of my study – as well as narratives of the role of east London and the Lea Valley from both a local and London perspective. These different readings take account of positionality or perspective and, drawing on Plesske's concepts, I further develop a reading of ideas that are consciously formulated in policies, promoted by politicians and others, and of those ideas which are prevalent and shared through narratives but are implicit or less consciously formulated.

The concept of 'mentality' carries meanings of 'mental structures of a specific collective time and space' (Plesske, 2014, p.153), a concept linked to Bakhtin's concept of chronotope (Bakhtin, 1937-38). Place is at the centre of my research, and place-time appears in concepts such as Borders, Fringes and Corridors. They are chronotopic in the sense that time is attached to place, for example by movement and connection. Borders become fixed historically and are then transcended or altered by events, such as the conceptual shift in writing a plan, or the material shift in the

development of a route; people move along routes and populations move across London and across territories. In these senses social meanings are attached to the idea of place and time. Some chronotopes lie at the heart of plan-making in the Lower Lea: the manifesto document entitled 'Stitching the Fringe' (DfL, 2013) is one obvious example.

2.9 Conclusions: key concepts used to develop my analytic framework

In this section, I identify some concepts drawn from the perspective of collaborative planning that I use for my analysis. This section feeds into the discussion of my analytic framework in Chapter 4.

Multiple 'ways of knowing' are expressed in the practice of planning and in the epistemological positions held by planners. I take it as self-evident that evidence-based planning, requiring planners to justify policies using scientific, rational and instrumental arguments, will continue to be integrity of planning, particularly but not exclusively in its function as a means to regulate development. Healey (2006, p.253) notes that planners bring the outside world into the room not just through the collection and analysis of data, as a rational-technical view of planning would contend. Planners and more generally people, she argues, bring 'their own professional and socio-cultural frames of reference to particular tasks' (Healey, 2006, p.253). I draw on these perspectives and consider planning to be an interpretive activity. Using the language of the collaborative planners, my research can be described as an exploration of plan-making understood as 'an inclusive dialogic approach to shaping social space' (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p.284).

I will follow Healey (2006, p.64) in her application of Giddens' 'conceptual investigation of the nature of human action, social institutions and the inter-relations between actions and institutions' (Giddens, 1991, p.201). I discuss Giddens' (1991) concept of structuration, the 'relations through which specific actions are shaped by structuring forces and through which structuring forces are themselves reproduced' further in Chapter 4.

I am interested in finding 'systems of meaning' (Schon & Rein 1994) that were reflected in and constructed by the plans for the Lea Valley. I seek out concepts and meanings, and to describe and analyse the ways they emerge as knowledge in non-linear ways in the planning process through 'complex, interactive, ongoing activity' (Healey, 2007, p.26). Having established that planning is an interpretive activity, I discuss in Chapter 4 how I will approach the task of interpreting the data I gather from the interpretive world of planning.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW – OLYMPIC LEGACY

3.1 A literature review of legacy related research

The purpose of this chapter is to review the body of literature concerned with the legacy of the London 2012 Games. I explore and critically evaluate writers' reviews about claims that the London 2012 Olympics would deliver a lasting legacy for the places and communities of east London. I seek to identify both the narratives linked to the idea of legacy and the counter-narratives that, in various ways, draw attention to the gap between the rhetoric of legacy claims and the reality of life in east London for the communities that the authorities claimed would benefit from the Games. I consider the relevance and justification for my focus on collaborative planning, and in conclusion I seek to identify and justify the gap in the legacy literature that my thesis attempts to address.

3.2 The evolution of the concept of legacy

The London Mayor made his support for the Olympic bid conditional on the Games being held in east London and thereby bringing investment to the deprived area in line with his emerging strategic plans for the capital. Sebastian Coe, Chair of the BOA said: 'Legacy is probably nine-tenths of what this process is about – not just 16 days of Olympic sport.' In 2005, London was awarded the 2012 Games based on the bid team's bold pledge: 'choose London and we will create an extraordinary legacy for the UK and the world' (BOA, 2004). The commitment to legacy was critical to meeting the Olympic criteria. Jacques Rogge, President of the IOC explained:

> The success of the Olympic Games is not determined solely by the 16 days of competition. To be truly successful, the Games should leave a positive legacy that endures long after the closing ceremony. Legacy planning has become an integral part of the Games preparation process from the very start. In selecting a host city for the Games, the IOC closely examines each candidate city's legacy plan and ensures that all the candidates benefit from knowledge gained by previous hosts (DCMS, 2012).

London's 6 legacy promises were, in summary: To make the UK a world-class sports nation: elite success, mass participation and school sport; To transform the heart of east London; To inspire a new generation of young people to take part in local volunteering, cultural and physical activity; To make the Olympic Park a blueprint for sustainable living; To demonstrate that the UK is a creative, inclusive and welcoming place to live in, to visit and for business; To develop the opportunities and choices for disabled people (DCMS, 2008).

Legacy is a malleable concept that can be interpreted and applied without restriction, making it a perfect branding tool for marketing for the UK Bid to diverse audiences. Brimicombe (2012) notes that 'legacy aspirations are often stated simply for public, non-technical consumption and tend to gloss over their underlying complexity and multi-dimensionality… For a start 'East London' does not have any standardised (administrative) geographical definition and so where is its 'heart' and furthermore what is intended to be transformed over what time horizon? For political reasons these are often left vague, so it is easier for politicians and administrators to say this or that aspect was a success (cherry-picking legacy), or if things are not going to plan to say that it is too soon to see an effect' (Brimicombe, 2012).

London's 2012 legacy, then, could mean something to everybody: from residents living near to the Olympic Park, through to all Londoners, businesses who might be suppliers of goods and services; and for the UK as a whole, the Games could mean everything from a means to promote UK plc internationally through to sports, education and culture for wide audiences right through to some glittering TV entertainment and a national party for the most passive participants among the public. In the New Labour era of the entrepreneurial individual, Games legacy included the ethos that anybody could improve their position simply by taking action to get fit, get educated and fight for improvement with the same spirit as an athlete preparing to compete. For local boroughs, the issue was how the Olympics would help or hinder existing plans and meet strategic aims. The locally specific claim of a lasting legacy for the communities of east London was also open to interpretation and it took some time after the successful bid was announced to make concrete what were the expectations for east London regeneration and socio-economic impact that could be

linked to the Olympic project. Initially, a team was created within the GLA, in the LDA, to develop a strategy for securing socio-economic legacy (Evans, 2016). In 2009, the OPLC was created. In parallel, the Olympic Host Boroughs, the local authorities in and around the Olympic Park, developed a SRF for reducing their levels of social and economic disadvantage to match other London boroughs (a process they labelled as 'Convergence'). The Olympic Host Boroughs, now rebranded as the London Growth Boroughs Partnership, assert that this partnership has a single, uniting commitment, to ensure 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' (Cabinet Office, DCMS, FCO, HO & UKTI, 2015).

Olympics and branding

MacRury and Poynter (2009) discuss the ways in which the Olympics offer can confer 'social and cultural meanings and values not shared by other sporting events' and, by association with the Olympic ethos, host cities share in 'an opportunity to celebrate the creation and consumption of the products and services of post-industrialism, with the event affirming a new kind of global status to the city that proves it can be a successful host' and 'a capacity for the host nation and city to affirm or reinvent itself as a site for investment in consumption based service industries such as tourism, financial and business services and event and conference management (MacRury, 2009). Since 1990, London's global city status has been defined by various economic functions, including financial services, corporate headquarters and professional services (law, accounting, information, journalism, intellectual property), creative and digital industries, higher education and research, tourism, entertainment and retail (Sassen, 1991). For London, a short-term 'legacy' impact of the Olympics was to provide a countervailing tendency to the 2008/09 recession and its impact on these sectors (DCMS, 2012). The 2012 Olympics offers host cities huge opportunities for city branding, promoting London's competitiveness to global capital and the qualities of the city as a secure and attractive place to invest, locate, work and live. The external audiences for this exercise in global city branding include investors, business leaders and high value-professionals who may influence, in their choices of where to live, the location decisions of major corporate companies. Legacy, in this context, comprises an acceleration in trends towards the restructuring of the post-industrial London towards a service-economy dependent on the city in

particular, and the knowledge-rich sectors such as finance, business services and culture, in general (Poynter, MacRury & Calcutt, 2012).

Further, MacRury (2009) argues that the Olympics 'legitimates, in the domestic sphere, the coming together of private and public partnerships to stimulate infrastructure investment and development consistent with this economic vision'. A key legacy of the Olympics, then, was to build familiarity with and acceptance of a form of organisation for planning, property development and asset management in which the state is intimately intertwined with the interests of private capital (Raco, 2013).

In London, MacRury asserts, the network of institutional relations remained largely 'state centred' with control firmly in the hands of national government, with a complex governance structure involving several tiers of government.[1] Promiscuous application of the legacy promise, promulgated by a centralised regime with an interest in garnering widespread support and legitimacy for the public commitment to spending and state intervention, created the condition for bold but vague promises.

> Under such conditions it is not possible to fulfil the expectations of all stakeholders, nor is it possible to effectively integrate or embed these institutions in the local community. A public rhetoric of partnership is sustained while local interests are increasingly dominated by national government, and the London Mayor (MacRury & Poynter, 2009, p. 309).

This tension between, on the one hand, global city place branding, marketing London to global investors, footloose corporates choosing between attractive world city locations and the lifestyle desires of their employees, and, on the other hand, the promise of improvements to the lives of local communities in east London, becomes a site of political contestation. The promoters of global city competitiveness do not ignore deprivation and inequality; rather they treat the issue as a sub-set of indicators of global city success. For example, the Jones Lang Lasalle (2017) momentum index, a measure of the world's most dynamic cities that tracks the speed of change of a city's economy and commercial real estate market, includes socio-economic

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[1] My thesis seeks to critically examine the internal discourse associated with the evolution of these arrangements.

momentum as one of 3 aggregated scores. Locally, the conflagration between the 2 strategies is addressed by discourse of 'socially inclusive growth' and 'sustainable development'. The ideologues who embrace the market as the route, real or potential, to improving the conditions of deprivation and social exclusion are at war with the leftists who interpret the Games as an embrace of neo-liberalism and thereby the further immiseration of the poor (Minton, 2017; Berry, 2017).

3.3 The changing institutional context and its impact on the legacy agenda

The claim to a legacy for the communities of east London represented a political commitment from the outset, and the play of politics is evident throughout the evolution of the legacy agenda, reflected in the framing of what legacy means, the allocation of responsibilities for delivery and the shifting institutional context from the development of the bid through to the present day (Bernstock, 2014; Evans, 2016). Some of the major modalities and shifts are outlined in the next five paragraphs. The research at the heart of this thesis seeks to explore and make sense of with the changing institutional and political context to help understand the twists and turns in the narrative of legacy and the part it plays in the wider narrative of Lower Lea regeneration.

The first episode concerns the consolidation of Ken Livingstone's power and authority vis-a-vis central government. Architect Richard Rogers had led the Urban Task Force and published the influential report 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' (1998), in the early years of Tony Blair's New Labour Government. Rogers had dedicated his office's support to informal work to make the case for siting the Olympic Park in east London and linking the project to an east London urban regeneration agenda that would express the principles of the Urban Task Force proposals (Rogers & Brown, 2017). Newly elected Mayor Ken Livingstone saw the opportunity to support the London Olympic bid insofar as it would leverage central government investment in infrastructure and development for east London. Livingstone charged his development team at the LDA with leading the development of the bid and thereby established his own position at a time when central government was reluctant to extend his powers.

The second episode features the distorting effect of the creation of regional government on the authority of local boroughs. There are 3 sub-plots to this episode: the creation of London government, then the formation of a new development corporation in east London, outside the control of the new regional government bodies, and finally the creation of the vehicles to promote the Olympics.

Before the creation of London government, central government disbursed regeneration funds via GOL through programmes such as the Single Regeneration Budget, and also promoted major development through the national agency EP and, in east London, through the special purpose vehicle London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC). Aside from local authorities, EP and LDDC were the main government vehicles for securing long standing planning commitments to accommodate planned growth in the Thames Gateway. Now, regional government would become the lead for both socio-economic and land and property development and, in London, this meant that the newly formed LDA, part of the Mayoral family of organisations, would inherit these functions and funding streams. As noted elsewhere, this arrangement disrupted the flow of special regeneration funds to the boroughs. The move also disenfranchised previously powerful individuals and groupings within the civil service at GOL and DCLG.

Before the Olympic bid was determined, in an alliance between the boroughs and the civil service, a new organisation was created that weakened the GLA and LDA's newly won powers and control over regeneration and development in east London. In 2004/05, the Government created a new time-limited special purpose vehicle, the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC), a non-departmental public body funded by central government, and with powers to promote development in northeast London - the Lower Lea Valley and further east in the London Riverside former industrial districts of Barking and Dagenham and Havering.

The strengthening of the central-regional government axis begged the question of how local government would engage in the Olympics: another strategic project that was ostensibly being imposed from above and this one being promoted by the London Mayor backed by the LDA, the very agency that had recently won control of regeneration powers and investment. The Olympics threatened to further

disenfranchise the local authorities, taking away their planning and regeneration powers, and absorbing a huge portion of London's regeneration funds that hitherto had been passed from central government directly to the boroughs. The newly created London government institutions had already removed control of regeneration powers and funds from the local authorities, and now the Olympics threatened to further distort priorities and divert regeneration investment.

The second episode reaches its resolution in the formation of the Host Boroughs organisation, as this represented one key way that the local authorities reasserted influence and established a distinctive voice over the process, setting the strategy by introducing a specific interpretation of the legacy agenda, linked to deprivation indices. In this way, the boroughs wrestled back authority in respect of policy areas such as access to employment, health, social infrastructure and crime.

The third episode is characterised by the intersection of the Host Boroughs' 'Convergence' agenda with the change of London mayoral control from Labour Ken Livingstone to Conservative Boris Johnson. The 'Convergence' political and policy statement by the boroughs was published in 2007, shortly before the time when control of London government passed from Labour to Conservative in 2008. Boris would go on to write the commitment to Convergence into the London Plan, an expedient move that expressed a broader pragmatism and bridge-building between London government and local authorities. The LDA, London's regional development agency and a product of New Labour era, had never been popular with London local authorities.

In a fourth episode of the shifting institutional context, the Conservative Government elected in 2010 moved to abolish regional development agencies and Mayor Johnson, already committed to reducing the spending and powers of the LDA, would close it down. The Olympics had swallowed a large portion of the LDA's spending; now the LDA was abolished and its responsibilities for Olympic legacy vested in a new dedicated organisation, the OPLC (Evans, 2016). While the ODA would focus on delivering the Games, OPLC would work immediately on the legacy agenda, and gear up for a handover of land and property assets from ODA post-Games. Boris Johnson led the abolition of LDA, and the transfer of the legacy responsibilities to OPLC, and

struck a consensus with the boroughs around their Convergence agenda, writing it into the London Plan (GLA, 2004).

In the final episode (within the study period), Mayor Boris Johnson consolidated his distinctive role in securing the delivery of the Games and claiming while reshaping the legacy agenda. Notably, he decided to retain Neale Coleman as his chief advisor in the GLA's executive team. Coleman was former mayoral advisor to Ken Livingstone and close Labour political ally. The decision reflected Mayor Johnson's appreciation of the utmost priority of delivering a successful Games, and an acknowledgement of how central Neale Coleman was to that project. There are a number of notable moments in the evolution of legacy under Boris Johnson. Significantly, he replaced OPLC with the LLDC, extending the agency powers, so that the vehicle controlled land and property development, and continued to hold planning powers that had been established to ensure the Games could be delivered successfully; LLDC controls both planning decisions and makes planning policies. The LLDC, the UK's first Mayoral Development Corporation, was established in 2011. The LLDC is now the main vehicle charged by the government with the management of the Olympic Park in legacy mode and with managing the Park's assets to secure their contribution to securing the promised local legacy. The creation of such a powerful vehicle accountable to the Mayor was smoothed by the sympathetic political rapport between Conservative Mayor Johnson and the Conservative government led by David Cameron. Indeed, the then Chancellor George Osborne oversaw the agreements between the GLA and the Treasury that ensured the LLDC was not overly encumbered by the huge debts incurred by the LDA to assemble the Olympic Park, and also provided central government funding to back Johnson's so called 'Olympicopolis' initiative to create a cultural quarter as a legacy project on the Park (explored further below).

Between 2007 and 2012 Mayor Johnson needed to ensure the Games were delivered successfully while he put his own stamp on the interpretation of the legacy promise. Johnson oversaw a number of shifts in the evolving legacy agenda. The re-designation of one of the major housing development sites as a culture quarter, which he branded Olympicopolis, was perceived by critics to be an example of Johnson's predilection for 'vanity projects', schemes for which he would be remembered. The Arcelor Mittal

Tower, a colossal steel sculpture and viewing tower, sponsored by the steel magnate and allegedly brokered by Johnson at a Davos summit, is another such scheme. Johnson's good relationship with the Chancellor appeared to be at play in his ability to re-designate valuable housing development sites for cultural uses, thereby reducing return on sale of assets, reflecting the benign relationships between London and central government. Johnson also oversaw London government's part in the wider shifts in housing policy that would transform the housing legacy commitments on the Olympic Park, while orchestrating a greater emphasis on employment.

As these institutional arrangements evolved, so too did the associated legacy narrative. In the early period, proposals for the physical legacy, to be delivered by the long-term development of the Park, was specified in the Olympic Legacy Masterplan. The LDA created a team to develop the socio-economic legacy, but proposals were formed more slowly and had less high-profile sponsorship. Meanwhile, an ever-expanding range of organisations across London and the UK claimed that their projects were integral to legacy and needed backing[2], adding to a general sense of imprecision. The Olympic Host Boroughs crafted the Convergence agenda, with a small number of specific high-level objectives, thereby in 2007 bringing specificity to the legacy agenda, though not necessarily to the actions for their delivery. The creation of the special purpose vehicle OPLC (and subsequently LLDC) to inherit the former Olympic Park and secure its long-term development and management, brought certainty of responsibility for delivery of those legacy outcomes dependent on the stewardship of the post-Games assets. The linked evolution of these episodes in organisational development and legacy narrative is set out in the table below.

Table 1: Evolution of the legacy narrative

EPISODE		PLOT	LEGACY NARRATIVE
1	Mayor Ken Livingstone establishes his authority vis-a-vis central government as the leader of the	Informal group lobbies for Games in east London; Ken Livingstone agreed to back UK bid if it is in east London; Tony Blair and Ken	The Games will bring investment to east London delivering housing and infrastructure; The Games will deliver a legacy

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[2] Matthew Price (pseudonym) interview transcript

	UK Olympic bid on his terms	Livingstone appear on stage to back the UK bid	for London and the UK.
2	The creation of regional government followed by the Olympic Bid takes further powers and resources away from local boroughs	The GLA/LDA is created, putting powers and resources in the hands of the London Mayor; The LTGDC is created, weakening the LDA's control in east London, in a move promoted by central government and backed by east London boroughs; The LDA promotes the Olympic bid and temporarily win back some power and authority; The LDA, directed by the London Mayor, provides the resources to write the bid, and to produce masterplans for the development of the Lea Valley and thereby shares in authorship of the legacy claims; ODA is created with responsibility for developing the Olympic Park; The LDA is required to support the ODA by assembling land, letting key contracts and undertaking preliminary works.	The proposed (physical) legacy of the Olympic Park is specified in a Legacy Masterplan commissioned by LDA; With the ODA in charge of the development of the Olympic Park, the LDA becomes de facto responsible for the wider (unclear) legacy agenda.
3	The boroughs promote the Convergence agenda and thereby establish their distinctive voice in legacy discourse	The boroughs work practically in support of the Games developments; The boroughs form the Olympic Host Boroughs group; The Host Boroughs adopt the Convergence strategy; Ken Livingstone loses the London Mayoralty to Boris Johnson; Boris Johnson writes Convergence into the London Plan.	East London Legacy specified as Convergence: within 20 years the communities who host the Olympic Games will have the same life chances as their neighbours across London.
4	The London Mayor	Boris Johnson reduces the	The Olympic Park is passed to

		powers of the LDA and then closes it down; The OPLC is created; OPLC is restructured and becomes LLDC; LLDC retains status of planning authority for its own land, post Games, and for the fringe neighbourhoods around the Park.	the legacy company (LLDC) after the Games, who convert the Park and promote development in line with the legacy masterplans; LLDC promote educational, economic and social legacy programmes to complement land and property development.
	creates a dedicated vehicle for the post Games legacy of the Olympic Park		
5	The London Mayor makes legacy his own	Boris Johnson's influence on the legacy agenda gathers pace.	Legacy is reflected in the development of the Arcelor Mittal Tower, the partial shifting of emphasis from housing development to enable higher education, digital and cultural economic and the 'Olympicopolis' cultural quarter developments.

3.4 Legacy: a potent myth and a promise in time and space

Legacy is a potent myth: its promises rouse the passions of what Phil Cohen labels 'Olympophiles' (Cohen, 2017), those avid supporters of the Games who hold faith that 2012 has indeed delivered a positive legacy for London, but also fuels the wrath of those Cohen labels 'Olympophobes', who are sceptical about the heroic claims and in particular antagonistic to the ways in which the Games have affected east London and its communities.

Ian Crockford, for example, is one such Olympophile. He is former project manager for the Olympic Stadium Development and now responsible for the International Quarter, a 4 million sq ft office development area between Westfield Stratford City and the Olympic Park. For property developers like Lend Lease, the metric of legacy is the impact of public investment in drawing investment eastwards:

> The location is its winning point…The mix of park ingredients has shifted over time, with fewer homes than originally planned for its future five new residential neighbourhoods but with the addition of... new [cultural] spaces for the V&A Museum, Sadler's Wells, University of the Arts London… There will be a new University College London campus, too... It's a tremendous mix of uses…Think of the synergy we're going to have with the surroundings.

This is why tenants want to come here. It's so different to other areas of London (Crockford, cited in Hill, 2015).

Crockford's mission is, of course, to sell commercial space. Inevitably, given that the rationale for the Games was to attract investment, promote development, build the London Brand internationally and to win the hearts and minds of the citizens of London and the UK, the benign assessment of Games legacy and the rhetoric of the sales pitch is ubiquitous among all the politicians, government agencies and officials involved in promoting and delivering the project.

From either perspective, the promise of legacy linked to the Games imposes a shape to our thinking about the Games, and the ways in which the area changes. The conceptual frame includes a both a sense of time and space: its phases are associated with bidding to win the Games, preparing the stage (the delivery phase), Games-time itself, and then the long phase in which the legacy dreams and ambitions are realised or alternatively they progressively fade and are forgotten. If the bidding stage involves dreaming and the authoring of extravagant promises (Cohen, 2017, p.3), then post-Olympic time involves waking from the dream and addressing the reality of what has or has not been achieved. Olympic time also has a spatial analogue (Cohen, 2017, p.3) in that the changed Olympic Park might be seen to express the dream realised, while the wider neighbourhoods, static, in decline, or changing as a consequence of wider economic and social forces, might be understood as areas that are back in time, in a queue waiting for the delivery of the promised Olympic legacy.

Immediately after the Olympic Games, the site was closed for a transitional phase, preparing the Park for its long term 'legacy' mode as QEOP. The LLDC commissioned proposals for temporary uses that would attract people and animate the huge expanses of space, pending the long-term redevelopment of the various sites in accordance with the vision in the adopted plan, the 'Legacy Communities Scheme'. At that point, one of the officers remarked that success of these early schemes would be judged on their ability to bring life to the Park even in the cold, wind, rain and

gloom of winter[3]. For Olympophiles, the Olympic legacy provides an afterglow of 2012 sunshine that shines even on the coldest of February days.

For the Olympophiles, the legacy promise is in an advanced stage of delivery in the Park itself, while elsewhere it is on its way; for the Olympophobes, the dream has arrived as a nightmare in the Park and at its fringes, while elsewhere the absence of an Olympic effect expresses a hollow promise. Josephine Berry is one such Olympophobe:

> In this disarticulated space of planting and place branding, art and athletics, picnicking and policing, entered through the Westfield shopping mall, the triumph of biopolitical economics over civic values and municipal idealism is all too evident… The park is a heavily scripted space, with wide, glued-gravel pathways able to accommodate Olympic processions that overwhelm dismal areas of planting…The usual spectacle of people's ad hoc use of park space for sports and relaxation is suspended in favour of commercially sponsored and council sanctioned events all heavily policed by high-vis clad security personnel…The Olympic Park's chaotic image expresses the wider inability of resolving the pragmatics of the neoliberal production of urban space into any coherent or deliberate aesthetic, schematic or civic programme (Berry, 2017).

Berry's condemnatory and somewhat dense language communicates her perception and interpretation of the Park's public realm. She invites us to recoil at (what she sees as) the scene before us: the imagery of a contemporary cityscape in the neoliberal age.

3.5 The challenge of measuring legacy

The Olympic bid to the IOC pledged:

> In the case of London, legacy planning includes an ambitious link of the Games to wider social and economic regeneration objectives, including revitalization of physical infrastructure on one hand and most importantly entire communities on the other, in a total of six London Boroughs surrounding the main Olympic area (London Olympics Candidature File, BOA, 2004).

Delivery of the so-called hard or physical infrastructure implied delivery of improvements to the transport connections in the area, the treatment of contaminated

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[3] Conversation with LLDC Officer, December 2012

land, the creation of a large publicly accessible park, the development of sports and leisure facilities, changes in land use attracting inward investment and bringing about the supply of new housing and commercial space, the creation of job opportunities, as well as social infrastructure such as schools, health centres and nurseries. Intangible benefits anticipated from the Games included and the creation of a 'sports hub' in east London; an increase in pride and self-esteem, along with cultural development and enhanced community and social cohesion; and an increase in participation in sports, and (through volunteering) the opportunity to improve practical skills and enhance community spirit (AMION Consulting, 2015).

Direct outputs of investment in physical infrastructure can be measured and monitored in quantitative terms. Appraisal of the impact of these interventions and the outcomes in terms of movement, housing supply, connectivity and so on is clearly complex and so quantitative output measurement has its challenges (Brimicombe, 2012). However, the task of establishing the metrics, impacts and outcomes that might be used to assess the 'social and economic regeneration of entire communities' is complex at another order of magnitude, and as noted above the nature of the task was simply not considered at the time the heroic claim was made in 2004, and only hesitatingly considered for some years afterwards. AMION Consulting (2015), commissioned by DCMS to produce an Olympic legacy research evaluation framework, note 'It is evident that the nature of potential regeneration impacts is highly complex and will be influenced by a range of extraneous factors, such as global economic performance and other major investments not related to the Games'. AMION Consulting's recommended evaluation framework proposes analysis of a wide range of metrics using a methodology rooted in the Treasury Green Book Appraisal regime (HM Treasury, 2003; AMION Consulting, 2015, p.34). AMION'S recommended impact assessment regime proposes assessment of changes in conditions at different geographic levels, people and communities of various demographies, and the use of methods to gauge the counterfactual, or what may have happened without the Olympics. Assessing the counterfactual is essential to appraising the net impact of the Games. As Brimicombe (2012) asserts, 'Hosting something like the Olympic Games is rarely context-free or designed on a *tabula rasa*; rather it is superimposed on existing trajectories of historical development'.

Three linked regimes have been applied to render the legacy commitment sufficiently specific to support evaluation. First is the evaluation of the changes in life conditions in relation to the metrics of the Convergence agenda set by the Olympic Host Boroughs (now the Growth Boroughs). The second regime is the DCMS sponsored '2012 Games Meta Evaluation' series of studies commissioned by DCMS and delivered by a research team led by Grant Thornton (DCMS, 2013). The third is the IOC's official evaluation of the legacy of the London Olympics, I will outline these first and then go on to consider a number of critical assessments of findings of these official legacy evaluations.

3.6 Measuring legacy: convergence

The Mayor of London joined with the Mayors and Leaders of the 6 Olympic Host Boroughs and committed to the Convergence aim, namely that: 'Within 20 years, the communities that host the 2012 Games will have the same social and economic chances as their neighbours across London.' The strategy for meeting this pithy commitment was set out in the Convergence Framework and Action Plan 2011 – 2015 (Host Boroughs & GLA, 2011). The Framework sets out objectives for seven socio-economic themes and defines a key measure in respect of each theme and a four-year programme of actions. The 2015-16 Convergence Annual Report, fifth in the series, (Growth Boroughs Partnership, 2016) indicates progress at or above target for 9 indicators, while targets for 6 indicators are assessed with 'amber' or warning signs and a further 6 with 'red' signs, namely where targets are not on track and in danger of not being met in the long term. The action plan asserts that 'fundamental to the strategy is the premise that we need to build on the projected growth in the area to equip local people to improve skill levels and access new jobs'. The report acknowledges the deep-seated nature of the conditions to be addressed and the complex nature of the factors being measured, their causes and potential means to influence them.

3.7 Measuring legacy: the DCMS meta-evaluation studies

DCMS published a comprehensive post-event evaluation of the impact of the Olympic Games in July 2013. The report reviews the impact of the Games with reference to twelve headline findings, based on an evidence base collated over a three-year period. The 'Regeneration of East London' is one of 4 thematic lines of enquiry. The report concluded that the Games had 'accelerated the physical transformation of East London', and 'shaped socio-economic change in East London' (DCMS, 2013, pp.30-35). Physical transformation has been catalysed and accelerated by land acquisition, remediation and development, including the creation of a comprehensive integrated site, beyond what would have been achievable by the private sector (DCMS, 2013, p.30; Davis, 2012) and that the Games secured a firm, immovable integrated timetable for development. Socio-economic change has been delivered, the report argues, through the creation of employment opportunities and the creation of community infrastructure, in the form of new homes, leisure, education and health facilities. The research also reports good progress in respect of the convergence indicators, with eleven of twenty-three indicators on track and a further 5 closing but slower than expected. The report indicates that east London's image as a place to live is improving and satisfaction growing among existing residents, but acknowledges the risks that Convergence in the indicators are not simply achieved through gentrification and resident mobility (DCMS, 2013, p.35), with existing poor and deprived residents moving away and more affluent residents moving in.

3.8 Measuring legacy: the Olympic Games impact study

The IOC requires that each host country produce an impact evaluation of Games legacy, commissioned and produced by independent researchers. A team led by University of East London (UEL) carried out this evaluation of the UK Games, and 4 reports were produced in total including a pre-Games study issued in 2010, followed by the final report, Olympic Games Impact Study – London 2012 Post-Games Report, published in December 2015. The report analyses data across sixty-seven indicators (fifteen environmental, twenty-seven socio-cultural, twenty-five economic), using secondary data for the most part and recording against a time series from 2003

onwards. The extensive analysis and reporting of quantitative data is supplement by a series of qualitative 'vignettes' that draw on quotes from experts and stakeholders.

The publication includes, among its conclusions, that 'the area in and around the Olympic Park has undergone extensive transformation and regeneration, fulfilling a key legacy promise' (UEL, 2015). Moreover, the report continues 'London, especially eastern London, has gained an exemplary rail transport infrastructure and will yield huge benefits through the legacy period'. 'The Athletes' Village has been converted successfully to residential properties and there is expanding commercial and residential development in and around the Park. The now QEOP is proving to be a popular recreational amenity, while the ecological and environmental functions of the site are well established'. 'All permanent, new Olympic venues are in secure ownership, management and popular use.' The study concludes that there is insufficient data to draw firm conclusions on sports participation trends in the Host Boroughs, but that poverty and social exclusion rates have reduced in the 6 Host Boroughs, in part due to the legacy effect (UEL, 2015, p.5). The report notes the limitations of analysing legacy only three years after the Games, 'but when and where the process ends and what will be the full magnitude of the effect is not yet known. The story of London 2012 will continue to unfold for a long time to come' (UEL, 2015, p.5). The research is based largely on analysis of quantitative data. The opportunities and limitations given by the adopted methodology and the data and are acknowledged by the authors (Brimicombe, 2015).

The final published report augments the findings of the research team with some qualitative data in the form of a 'series of themed vignettes or short essays […] commissioned from experienced professionals who worked on aspects of the London 2012 Games and who […] provide perceptive, though personal, views' (UEL, 2015, p.4). Cohen and Watt (2017) note that the vignettes, taken as they are from people who have been actively involved in the planning and delivery of the 2012 Games, 'perhaps unsurprisingly, tend towards portraying Games and legacy "successes"'. Their broader critique of the methodology of the UEL led legacy study for the IOC includes the challenge that the study fails to adequately unpick the specific impact of the Games from other trends, including, for example, a broader London-wide gentrification process (Taylor, 2016, p.14), that has elsewhere been characterised as a

trend of 'gentrification on steroids' (Watt & Minton, 2016, p.218), or government post-austerity policies (Cohen & Watt, 2017, p.8). While the executive summary concludes 'that London 2012 has been a catalyst for positive change is not in doubt…', there are a number of critical commentaries on Games legacy, and these are reviewed below.

3.9 Assessing legacy: reckless promises

At a seminar held in December 2015 at the launch of the final Olympic Games Impact Legacy Report, a number of critical voices challenged the upbeat conclusions of the report, provoking a former civil servant to assert that we made a 'number of reckless promises', in asserting that the Games would 'deliver things it never could do'. He argued that future Olympic Cities should learn from London to make more modest claims and focus on the role that concentrated investment in infrastructure would make in attracting new investment and development into an area, where London has indubitably secured a legacy in attracting development to Stratford. Needless to say, his call for a retreat from the breathy legacy claims of 2004 did little to narrow the gap in the assessment of legacy among the Olympophiles and the Olympophobes represented at the event.

The seminar heard withering assessments from local voices who observed that changes on the Olympic Park site itself are not reflective of wider changes in east London, themselves the consequences of market driven social and economic developments and also government spending cuts. The deficit in social welfare infrastructure of east London, participants observed, is not addressed by the Olympics evaluations. Thus, evaluation tools for the Olympics are flawed, they claimed, because they do not address these issues of the social need that heroic claims to legacy suggested could be overcome by hosting the Olympics. Moreover, it was reported that key indicators of overcrowding, homelessness and reducing waiting lists have been removed from the Convergence reports since 2009.

Such criticisms clearly challenge the 'extravagant claims of regeneration' (Cohen, 2017, p.3) made to support the Olympic bid. At that point the claim that the Olympics would catalyse the transformation of east London added to London's sense of

ambition and optimism; now the criticisms draw attention to the difficulties of the counterfactual: namely, that wider social and economic changes at play that are not linked to the Olympics, or indeed that the Olympics contributes to perceived dis-benefits, such as driving up property values and removing local businesses.

3.10 Affordable housing and gentrification

At the same seminar following the official launch of the Olympic Games Impact Legacy Report, a housing expert launched a blistering attack on weaknesses in the 2013 DCMS legacy meta evaluation reports, commenting:

> In 116 pages the term social housing appears twice; the term 'affordable housing' appears 5 times. By contrast the report includes 12 pages on property land valuation and 9 figures addressing house prices. In other words, the official housing evaluation of the Games has no proper evaluation of housing need in east London (Anonymous Academic and Housing Researcher, 2015).

This criticism expresses a broader incredulity with the housing legacy claims associated with the Olympics, given how market developments and policy changes have affected both housing supply and housing need in east London. The proposition that Olympic housing development would increase the supply of affordable housing in east London has been the subject of extensive and detailed critical evaluation (Bernstock, 2014; Watt & Bernstock, 2017; Watt & Minton, 2016). Housing policy was transformed by the shift in the Mayoral administration from Labour to Conservative in 2008, and also by the election of a majority Conservative government in 2010. The commitment to 'affordable' housing was central to Livingstone's London Plan (Bowie, 2010) and thereby to the early masterplans for the Olympic Park in legacy mode (EDAW). Even in that period, the policy claim and the estimates of 'affordability' were contentious, both in terms of the definition of affordability and the ability of developers to avoid or dilute planning requirements to deliver affordable housing on the basis of market viability tests (Bowie, 2010). Policy shifted following the London Mayoral election in 2008 and the national government elections in 2010 with the consequence of lowering the commitment to affordable housing in the LLDC plans, notably the Legacy Communities Scheme in 2012 and the LLDC Local Plan in 2014. The elections of Conservative leaderships of London and the country combined to place greater emphasis on the constraints given by developers' viability

assessments, shift the definition of affordability to a proportion closer to market rents, lower the required proportion of affordable housing within a given development and, through changes to the benefits system, make it more difficult for sections of the population to afford the so-called 'affordable' rents (Bernstock, 2014; Watt & Bernstock, 2017).

3.11 Ground control

The second edition of Anna Minton's book Ground Control (2012), first published in 2009, was updated and extended to include a new chapter on the 2012 Olympics. Minton describes and analyses pernicious trends towards the privatisation of ownership of public spaces and their regulation to circumscribe uses in narrow and thereby sanitised ways, welcoming some behaviours and people, and excluding others. Minton argues that the Olympic Park exemplifies these trends: a place where the freedoms necessary for a healthy civic sphere, here embodied in the freedoms to occupy and use public space, are subsumed to the interests of property development and business. Minton is attuned to measures for the micro-management of inclusion and exclusion and more generally to the forms in which the state is being restructured in public-private partnerships to create and sustain opportunities for capital accumulation, a theme she develops further in her 2017 book 'Big Capital (Minton, 2017).

3.12 Economic development and business dispersal

The Olympic Park site was cleared of all of its pre-existing users, including the many industrial businesses previously located there, in the period 2004 – 2007 as a consequence of the enactment of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) by the LDA. Firms were relocated, by negotiation where possible and then by compulsion. 208 firms, employing 4,984 people, were affected by the time the CPO was enacted (Davies, Davis & Rapp, 2017). Generally, and following existing trends for the relocation of industry, firms either closed or moved to the east and other London Plan designated Strategic Industrial Locations or further out beyond London where rental values were cheaper. Closures of relocated firms stood at 12% in 2008, one year after the Park site was cleared, and then 31% by 2015; closures were disproportionately

higher among business that had relocated in boroughs very near to the Park, at higher rates among manufacturing companies including traditional sectors like print and motor vehicle repair and food wholesale (Davies et al., 2017). These changes reflect market trends (conversion of industrial land to residential uses, loss of manufacturing from London) and the impact of the Games was to accelerate those trends. The process of relocation was clearly costly, time consuming and disruptive for many, while the new locations brought advantages for some (Davies et al., 2017).

3.13 The nostalgia of the critics

Critics of the official legacy claims of the Olympics tend to construct a counter-narrative, one that suggests there was a better or more authentic past compared to the dystopian present of the post-Olympic Lower Lea. The construction of the Olympics has 'largely effaced' the landscape (Cohen & Watt, 2017, p.2). What is the prior landscape that the Olympics effaced? Was it the Valley with its additional navigation river and canal cuttings added to watercourses to drive the industrial revolution? Was the soil better when it was polluted with chemicals from printing, dyeing, skinning and tanning in Dickensian London?

The search for the un-effaced landscape must drive us back in history, but the intellectual challenge does not recede. Was the landscape 'natural' when it was appropriated for hunting by Henry VIII? Even at that point, the river crossings at Stratford-by-Bow and other points represented human interventions to overcome the challenges of the landscape. The marshlands of the River Lea, prevalent when the border between Anglo Saxon England and Danelaw was established there, resurface as a mythical landscape condition both in the 'un-effaced' non-Olympic imaginary of the critics, and both romantically and functionally in the landscape architecture of the Park as it has been realised. Marshland is incorporated into the vernacular of the north park, crafted as a wild space and a return to 'natural' riverine conditions, and functionally serving as a flood mitigation measure. At worst, the search for an un-effaced landscape morphs into an anti-human sentiment: a longing for the moment when, as one artist put it to me when he was leading a walk around the area in 2016, Westfield Shopping Centre, monument to human folly, will sink back into the mud.

His vision was for nature's marshlands to reclaim the ground from all the wrongs that history and humankind had committed there.

Anna Minton's focus on the contemporary ways in which state and capital are intertwined are well observed, but the implication that there was a more benign period in the past, or in other geographies, is open to challenge. Behr (2009) embraces the book's overall analysis while pointing to its tendency to romanticise conditions in references to conditions in international cities. My personal observation is that the characterisation of the Olympic Park as a highly regulated and indeed sanitised space in relation to its past condition is true, but this observation belies the informality introduced by the contemporary public in its occupation and use of the space, irrespective of the governance arrangements; the critical challenge tends to underplay the ways in which the Park is used in effective and popular ways by a diverse public. Simply, the more the Park is occupied and enjoyed, and especially when regulation is accepted or not in evidence, the more critical challenge appears counter-intuitive. Finally, the tendency to blame privatisation for the regulation of public space does not address the point that the public sector, led by local government, are often the most strident agencies in imposing new regulations that micro-manage behaviour in public spaces (Appleton, 2016).

3.14 Implications of legacy literature for my research

Cohen and Watt write of 'occlusion and forgetfulness, in which cultural memory and local history are overgrown by the hand of nature and the march of time' (Cohen & Watt, 2017, p.2). They talk of the temporality of the promise of the Games, given on the one hand by an imagined future 'looking forwards to a more or less utopian future' and a memory that 'looks back in regret at what was once a utopian ideal' (Cohen & Watt, 2017, p.3). This spectacle, they suggest, often informs academic research into legacy, whereby the 'mega-event' is studied as a tabula rasa. They call for a longer lens that extends the time-frame for the study of change brought about by the Olympics. My own research seeks to study planning for the Lower Lea starting from a point before the Games was conceived, to avoid this tendency of treating the Olympic decision as a cliff edge at the beginning of time. Cohen and Watt sketch out the contours of the 'official optimism that 2012 will provide lasting benefits to the

communities of East London' (Cohen & Watt, 2017, p.10), based on learning lessons from the past, replacing top-down planning with 'civic participation, communication and the local' (Bernstock, 2009).

MacRury (2009) draws attention to various forms of narrative that arise in these circumstances. There is the 'mystique-story of the Olympic intervention in London, as a (legitimate and legitimating) source of transformative power within the city and its communities' requiring much official investment to render an extra-ordinary Olympic story credible. Counter-narratives are mounted with the purpose of debunking and demystifying the official 'Olympics as regeneration story'. These 2 genres of story are told respectively by 'Olympophiles' and 'Olympohobe's (Cohen, 2017). Then there are narratives that seek to resolve the gap between the practical, financial and political accountability of ordinary city planning, against the 'creative accounting' of the Olympic dreams. MacRury discusses how the terms 'top down' and 'bottom up' 'and 'hard' -and 'soft' legacy are applied. He distinguishes between material changes and 'inspirational', moral or affective gains' such as spiritual well-being and strengthened social networks. MacRury notes how legacy is used to discursively construct time: using a frame of before, during and after the Games, with the 'legacy' emphasis on the long term. The long-term legacy benefits justify the short-term extravagant expense. Finally, MacRury points to the balance between the largeness of the initial promise in legacy rhetoric and the vagueness of what, ultimately, is to be delivered up.

My primary research brackets out the wider narratives, to create the space for me to explore the development, of 'official' narratives themselves. This is not to say I am unconcerned with wider legacy narratives, only to acknowledge that my research seeks to examine stories as they are told from the perspective of those who were in leading positions. I seek out 'insider' stories in order to reveal their textures, currents and layers and, especially, to review how those stories interact, align or pull apart. To what extent and in what ways do the various narrative forms highlighted by MacRury, Cohen and Watt above feature in this internal 'lifeworld' of the policy community? This is the gap in the research that my thesis seeks to fill.

Gillian Evans (2016) has already written an excellent inside story of the development and delivery of the London Olympic legacy. Her book is a detailed anthropological study based on her success in negotiating her ability to study the 2012 legacy from the inside of the LDA and the OPLC over a number of years in which she had extensive access to the stories of the principal actors in the legacy agenda. Distinguishing my own work from this authoritative account is a formidable challenge. My particular contribution to knowledge has a different focus from Evans in the following ways. First, I adopted a longer lens, and unlike Evans I draw on data from the period 1995 to 2005, the decade that precedes the main period for which Evans has access to her informants. My study, I hope, is therefore able to provide insights into the shift from the 'old' to the 'new' in terms of policies and institutions. Also, my emphasis is different in the sense that Evans is particularly concerned with the efficacy of legacy policy and the arrangements established to deliver legacy. Hers is a story of triumph, the triumph of characters whom she portrays as valiant champions of legacy, whose commitment to the communities of east London shines through and wins out against considerable odds. My account is soberer in its attempt to reflect on the characteristics of the institutions and processes at play, and consider them in their political, historic and institutional context. Evans tells a story of *legacy,* while I seek to tell a story of the *narrative form that policy development takes* within this study period and in this case. Thus, my emphasis within an overlapping body of data is different. Finally, because I do not make 'legacy' the main focus of my own research, I hope to avoid being a hostage to the analytic framework legacy discourse tends to engender. Following Cohen and Watt (2017), I want to be alive to the way legacy discourse constructs a way of understanding the world in time (before, during and after the Olympics) and in space (on the Park, at its fringes and beyond), and to reflect on what alternative ways of understanding the area and its development are lost, distorted and recast by the temporary imposition of ways of seeing or meanings in policy, academia and public discourse given by Olympic spectacles.

3.15 Rationale for my focus on collaborative planning

In this section, I cross-reference my choice of a 'collaborative planning' lens to study the evolution of plans and planning in the Lea Valley with my review of literature on

Olympic legacy and make the case that my focus on the inter-subjective dialogue within a community of officials meets a gap in knowledge about Olympic legacy.

I have argued (in Chapter 2) that planners perceive themselves to be engaged in dialogic processes that build consensus around preferred courses of action, both because they share in a professional culture that sees the world this way, and also because a commitment to a dialogic process is enshrined in the planning policy framework. However, I do not suggest that planners involved in the Lea Valley were at the centre of, and thereby able to broker, processes of decision making in the Lower Lea in the study period: rather they were one community, itself comprising multiple interests and agents, in a wider complex institutional and stakeholder environment. The planners as a whole never sat in controlling positions, though particular plans and some individual planners do play defining roles at times; their influence is episodic.

Complexity theorists (Innes & Booher, 2010) would characterise contemporary urban planning challenges like those in the Lower Lea Valley as examples of a 'wicked problem'. Such circumstances, complexity theorists propose, are not susceptible to solution through the use of traditional linear rational models of planning and intervention. Instead, they propose that such circumstances be understood as features of a 'complex adaptive system' (Campbell, 2011) and, as such, a more appropriate strategy is to promote 'collaborative rationality', or an authentic dialogue among diverse and interdependent agents (Innes & Booher, 2010). To approach such a challenge, collaborative planners recommend a style of planning that builds dialogue between agents in such circumstances, in which agreements are staging posts in an ongoing process rather than end points. 'Relational webs' (Healey, 2007) should be established that are capable of unlocking 'network power' (Innes & Booher, 2002). Dialogic forms of inquiry using techniques such as framing and reframing issues, using metaphors, engaging in storytelling, role telling and engaging in conceptual bricolage are, collaborative planners argue (Innes & Booher, 2010), appropriate to the tasks of loosening institutional constraints and opening up the prospects for a more open-ended, adaptive approach to problem solving. These ideas, which frame planning practice as dialogue, connected with and informed the types of question I would ask in exploration of the nature of planning in the Lea Valley. Did the

processes at play reflect or differ from the ideals of collaborative rationality? This line of inquiry informed the development of my research questions.
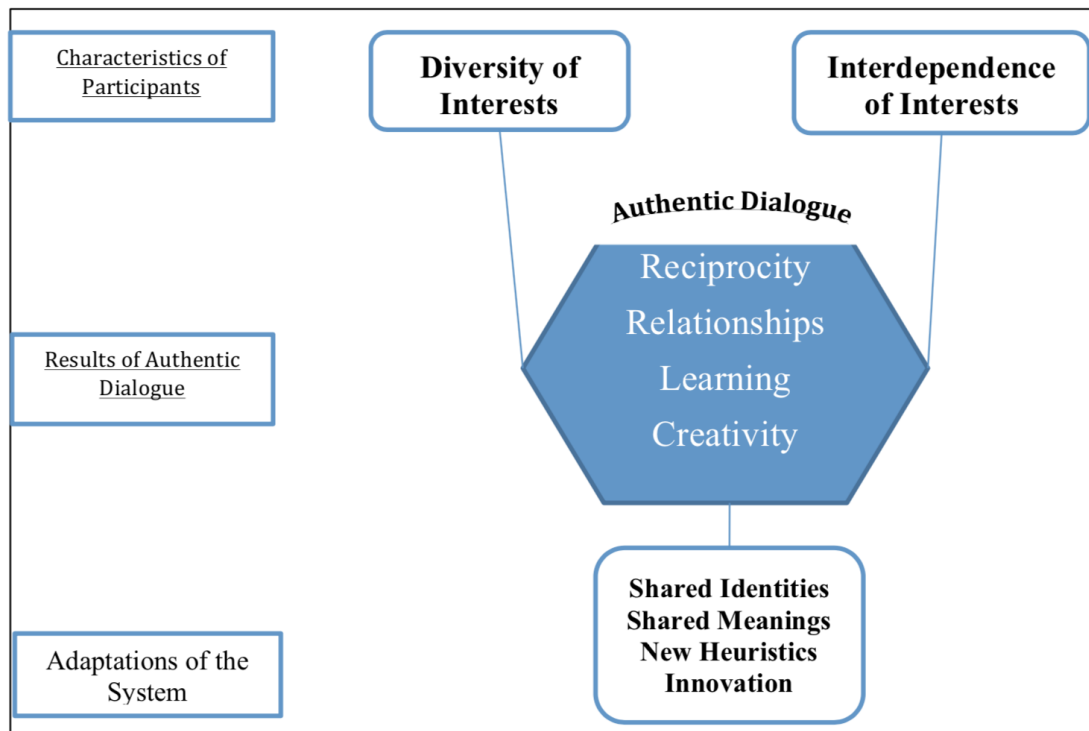
Figure 3: Diversity, interdependence and authentic dialogue (Wright, 2017)

A sufficient consensus was reached within the official community on the strategy to deliver the 2012 Games and a post-Olympic legacy. The findings in Chapters 6 to 9 consider to what extent, and how, some of the strategies for securing consensus proposed normatively by collaborative planning theorists were de facto at play in the institutions created, the resolutions made, and actions taken in the Lea Valley in this study period. My review here of the literature on Olympic legacy, indicates that my focus on collaborative planning is a contribution that meets a gap in respect of academic knowledge connected to the 2012 Games.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I set out my research methodology. My chosen methodology is a narrative ethnography, in that it is the product of a particular kind of ethnographic study: one that uses the framework and tools of narrative analysis to inform all of the stages of my research, from data collection, analysis and theory development through to the presentation of my findings: from this outlook I take my interviews as occasions for constructing accounts (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti, 2012: 1102-1103). I pay attention both to the construction of narrative accounts by my respondents and my own narrative work in producing interview accounts, through to using the tools of narrative for analysis (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti, 2012: 1194). While there are examples of narrative analysis that employ quantitative and qualitative methodologies, my own research is a qualitative inquiry, concerned with the expression of ideas and meanings. I make some limited use of statistics to paint a picture of the social context, but my analysis focuses on questions of 'what kind?' rather than 'how many?'

4.2 Ontology and epistemology

I assume that there is a material reality and also that social phenomena are constructed, in the tradition of 'subtle realism':

> an external reality exists but is only known through the human mind and socially constructed meanings (Blaikie, 2007, cited in Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls & Ormston, 2014).

I make use of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), a framework I introduced in the context of my discussion of collaborative planning in Chapter 2. I use structuration theory to support my exploration and interpretation of my findings and discuss this in Section 4.8 below. Structuration theory as based on an ontological outlook that assumes an interplay of the objective world of social structures and the subjective

world of agency, given by people expressing choices based on their interpretation of circumstances and the exercise of will.

I adopt an interpretivist epistemology. Interpretivism is concerned with uncovering the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the construction of social life (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). What counts as knowledge is 'mediated, situated, provisional, pragmatic and contested' (Blackler, 1995, p.1040). Interpretation is a feature of the social phenomena I am studying: plan-making is an interpretive process; it is intimately concerned with the generation of meanings: 'discovering and confirming meaning' (Moore Milroy, 1991). Planning involves 'framing and naming the phenomena of an urban region' (Schon & Rein, 1994). Moreover, in Chapter 2 I have discussed the ways some collaborative planning theorists connect narrative to the project of meaning-making in planning, contending that planning involves encounters between multiple stories. 'New ways of seeing and hence the potential for a new strategic story to emerge are 'discovered' through the activity of strategy-formation and exploration itself' (Healey 2007, p.249).

4.3 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a research strategy distinguishable from quantitative research by a number of characteristics including: a tendency to be concerned with words and meanings rather than numbers, and a constructionist ontology that assumes social properties are generated interactively. I am interested in how themes and meanings in plans are generated interactively, and to do this I examine the world through the interpretations of the people being studied. I am not concerned with quantitative data, asking questions about 'what?' and 'how many?' but rather with qualitative issues of 'why?' and 'what kind?'; focusing on capturing the perspectives of people involved in planning, and exploring them for their nuance, depth and subjectivity. Thereby, I seek to consider the relationship between what is considered to be, or constructed as, 'true' and the context for such truth claims, taking into account culture, history, situation, time, as well as the people involved. I adopt an inductive approach to theory generation, whereby the theory arises out of the research rather than the other way around (Bryman, 2008, p.366).

Qualitative methods are useful for describing phenomena, exploring how they are experienced and understood by those connected with them 'in fine-tuned detail and in the study participants' own terms' (Ritchie & Ormston, 2014, p.31). Ritchie and Ormston (2014) discuss the functions of narrative research, and propose the following general classification:

Contextual – describing the form or nature of what exists
Explanatory – examining the reasons for, or associations between, what exists
Evaluative – appraising the effectiveness of what exists
Generative – aiding the development of theories, strategies or actions.

My inquiry into the role of narrative in planning is an example of '*contextual research*' (Ritchie & Ormston, 2014, p.31) or descriptive and exploratory research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Robson, 2011, cited in Ritchie et al., 2014), concerned with identifying what exists in the social world and the way it manifests itself. This type of research is useful for discovering and describing the meaning people attach to phenomena, and to support the development of typologies and groups: for example, I adopted such strategies in seeking out narrative themes in my findings and in exploring the construction of elements of narrative structure such as place setting authorship and counter-narrative. My research is also *explanatory* insofar as my account generates insights into why the individuals and groups I studied made conscious use of narrative methods, or how meanings represented in narrative formed a part of the tacit knowledge shared within the professional community. My research is *evaluative* and *generative* insofar as my findings appraise what works based on my analysis and generates insights into the ways in which narrative methods are useful tools in planning.

4.4 Interpretivism

Interpretivism, as noted above, focuses on how those being studied interpret their social world. It is also concerned, in the course of research, with the interpretation of research data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Data can be both 'interpretive and require interpretation' (Ahmed, 2012). By adopting an interpretivist stance, I assume

'knowledge is partial, structured by the perspectives of the inquirer and situated in a specific context' (Healey, 2007, p.240).

Interpretation occurs at 2 levels: as a feature of the social phenomena I am studying, and my interpretation of that world through my research. Applying this double hermeneutic to my own research, my data (planning narratives, policy documents, stories embedded within them and the accounts of people interviewed) carry and communicate interpretations of the Lower Lea Valley, and the people and institutions associated with regeneration. I necessarily bring my own perspective and apply my own interpretation to the phenomena being studied right from the process of selecting the research field and carrying out interviews, through to interpreting the findings and drawing conclusions. It follows from this general position that I, the researcher, am not objective (Mishler, 1986) and this, in turn, frames the nature of the claims I can make based on my analysis and conclusions: my interpretation is necessarily implicated in my findings.

I start from the assumption that plans are constructed inter-subjectively. Drawing on Walter's (2013) reading of Mandelbaum (1990), I further assume that plans can be read as narratives (Walter, 2013, p.18). I identify how narratives draw upon cultural resources, including other narratives, through what may be viewed as inter-textual processes of plan-making. My reading of plan-making places particular emphasis on the construction of meanings around 'place' and 'authorship'; I also read my data for counter-narratives. I consider how uncertainties and ambiguities played out in the planning process and how they were resolved. I am sensitive to the nature and practice of agencies, formal and informal norms of behaviour and routines of practice embedded in the institutional context I have studied.

4.5 Ethnography

The etymology of the word itself is clear: the prefix ethno- is concerned with people, whilst the suffix -graphy is concerned with writing; hence ethnography is 'writing about people'. An ethnography is an in-depth study of what might be considered everyday cultural phenomena, with the aim of revealing the structures of the culture being studied (Cook & Crang, 1995). Ethnography pays close attention, or scrutinises,

circumstances, actors and actions in the course of communicating accounts (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009, p.22). Brewer gives an expanded definition of ethnography, cited in Silverman (2006):

> Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or the 'field' by methods of data collection, which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also in the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner (Brewer, 2000, p.6).

This thesis is ethnographic in the general sense that I am writing about people (planners or people engaged in some way in the planning process) and studying their activities in the field. I am involved in the setting, learning about the activity of spatial planning through participation and observation, as well as other methods of data collection. Thus, I acknowledge the ethnographic dimensions of the research.

Ethnography involves understanding the social world or culture – the shared behaviours, beliefs and values – of particular groups, typically via immersion in their community. Ethnographic research seeks to discover and describe meanings people attach to particular phenomena, and to study how, in practice, people construct those meanings (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, p.13). Ethnography is closely associated with observational techniques for studying social groups (Silverman, 2011). My ability to observe is based on my immersion in the field as a professional, and thereby my empathy with the context in respect of the accounts of my respondents: I was a participant observer. My data, the evidence I gathered about meanings generated by those I observed in the field, is coloured by the meanings I bring. In this sense, my approach to ethnographic research involves an exchange between the naturally occurring data of meanings in the field and generative data, or meanings I bring in the course of interpreting phenomena.

Narrative ethnography represents a choice on my part to focus on narrative constructions of meaning in the study of culture in the sphere of spatial planning in the Lower Lea, I analyse planning documents as a category of place narrative, operating in a wider context of people's shared ideas and values about the way the Lower Lea is changing. The term narrative is at the core of the object of my study:

narrative describes one aspect of the method adopted in spatial planning practice (Sandercock, 1998). Narrative also refers to the research method: I will pursue a narrative inquiry in order to interpret the data that I collect. Finally, my research is ethnographic in the sense that it is a study of people, in this case the people involved in planning within their natural setting. To do so, I collect data in the field and participate in the setting in order to collect data systematically and to seek to understand how people understand their world.

4.6 Narrative analysis

In recent decades, there has been marked growth of academic interest in 'narrative knowing' (Polkinghorne, 1988). Narrative is a specific form of discourse within which events, experiences and characters are linked together via a plot to form a story (Alleyne, 2015). Gee (2005), describes discourse as 'language in use'. Schmidt (2008), in an essay concerned with discourse in the context of politics and institutions, defines discourse as 'the interactive process of conveying ideas'. Bax (2011) differentiates between several forms of discourse, of which the 'narrating discourse mode is characterised by the presentation of a sequence of events within a recognisable narrative structure' (Alleyne, 2015; Bax, 2011, p.77). Narratives are sequential and meaningful:

> ... a speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker wants listeners to take away from the story. Events perceived by the speaker as important are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience (Riessman, 2008, p.3).

Academic interest in narrative as a way of knowing and narrative inquiry as a linked analytic method is mirrored by a more popular fascination with narrative, and it is undoubtedly the case that my own research question was framed as an interest in narrative because I was aware that some practitioners, notably urban designers but also others, expressed a concern with stories in the way they talked about plan-making. They seemed to me to be talking about a literacy in thinking about places that I took to be different from the worlds, for example, of quantity surveyors or planning officers and their respective preoccupations with development surveying or development management and control. I shared in an interest in the stories of places

even though I was, at the time, unschooled in the academic and theoretical issues connected with narrative inquiry. My naïve interest sparked my academic journey.

Academics in this field start from the assumption that the use of narrative as a way to construct and share knowledge is ubiquitous. We use narrative to constitute and reconstitute experience, bring meanings and generating connectedness to experience (Squire, 2013, p.48). Riessman makes the link between narrative and interpretivist epistemology by signifying that narratives require interpretation: 'narratives don't speak for themselves' (Riessman, 2008, p.3).

Narrative analysis brings with it a number of attributes relevant to the task in hand, including sensitivity to:

> The connections in people's accounts of the past, present and future events and states of affairs; people's sense of their place within those events and states of affairs; the stories they generate about them; and the significance of context for the unfolding events and people's sense of their role within them (Bryman, 2008, p.553).

Structural narrative analysis focuses on the *form* of narrative as distinct from its content and answers the question '*how* is this said?' as distinct from thematic analysis, with its focus on the content and on *what* is said (Ahmed, 2012). As a broad discipline, structural analysis draws on tools developed within the discipline of linguistics and literary criticism (Propp, 1984; Todorov, 1969, 1977; Greimas, 1966), and from this pays attention to systems of language and semiotics. Among its methodological strengths, structural analysis offers a means to interpret underlying structural features that drive a story along. The focus is not simply on the discrete elements of story, events, characters, context and so on, but on how the elements are linked together in ways that make the story compelling, making it work as *narrative* rather than as more generic discourse or text.

A number of approaches to structural narrative analysis, from Aristotle onwards, work from the premise that successful stories have a universal structure or draw upon a limited palette of readily identifiable plots. Aristotle, in his study of poetics, of the pursuit of art and beauty in drama, adopts a method of abstraction that includes the

simple assertion that a successful story has a beginning, a middle and an end (Booker, 2004, p.18). Aristotle's classical schema for analysing narrative structure in drama, based on a three- act structure of equilibrium, disruption and return to equilibrium, has been widely developed and used both by analysts of narrative and also by fictional writers.

Propp's research into the morphology of the Russian folktale (Propp, 1984) led him to identify a palette of thirty-one functions and seven character functions upon which folktales draw. Booker (2004), based on his study of hundreds of individual stories, proposes that there are 7 basic archetypal plots that all stories adopt, albeit with endless variation in their application. Todorov's schema starts out from a five-part structure (Todorov, 1969; Alleyne, 2015, p.64):

- Setting
- Disruption
- Recognition of disruption
- Attempt to resolve disruption
- Final equilibrium

Todorov (1977), with echoes of Aristotle, claims to identify a minimal plot shared by all stories:

> [It] consists in the passage from one equilibrium to another. An ideal narrative begins with a stable situation which is disturbed by some power or force. There results a state of disequilibrium; by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction the equilibrium is re-established; the second equilibrium is similar to the first but the two are never identical (Todorov, 1977, p.111).

I acknowledge here that this assumption of a universal plot schema has been challenged. Notably Ahmed (2012), with reference to Denzin (1997) and Trinh (1989), considers how this search for such universal plot structures in part derives from Western storytelling conventions, and thereby ignores other ways of telling and listening (Trinh, 1989, p.142, cited in Ahmed, 2012), in which 'storytelling itself is not an event or structured; instead it is informal, meanders, and is without a natural beginning or end'. Ahmed draws attention to a risk that 'attempting to impose structure on stories risks replacing the narrator's meaning with the analysts' and the

text is reduced to a display for the analyst's critical activity (Denzin, 1997, cited in Ahmed, 2012).

Where I make reference to plot in my findings, I use the five-part structure of plot from Todorov, referred to earlier, to give me an easily applicable device and a means of organising my research findings and presenting them within a plot. *Emplotment* might be thought of in 2 ways: in planning terms as the delineation of place[4], and the narrative act of emplotment (Ameel, 2016) considered now as a structural feature of narrative. Clearly, Ameel's double entendre is both fun and also potentially rewarding as a way of thinking about the role of narrative in spatial planning.

4.7 Structuration theory

Structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) offers a framework for exploring and interpreting the structured context for action, or the dynamic interrelationship between structure and agency and thereby offers a way to engage conceptually with the interplay of the objective world of social structures and the subjective world of agency, given by people expressing choices based on their interpretation of circumstances and the exercise of will. According to Giddens' theory, each of these abstractions, structure and agency, is implicated in the other. While social systems have structural properties, they are not structures per se, in the sense that conditions for social reproduction are fixed by them. Rather, 'social activities regularly reconstitute the circumstances that generated them in the first place' (Giddens, 1991, p.204). His conceptual scheme 'allows one to understand both how actors are at the same time creators of social systems yet created by them'. Thus, he stresses the interrelation of structure and agency, enabling analysis of the 'often delicate and subtle interlacing of reflexively organised action and institutional constraint' (Giddens, 1991).

For Giddens, agency is exercised in an ongoing way as subjects engage in social life: 'chronologically' in the 'flow of life'. Humans are purposive, but this is expressed in a continual process of action and monitoring, rather than discretely through a series of

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[4] To reinforce the point, I am using the term place here in a similar fashion to Gidden's concept of *locale*, meaning a bounded territory in which there is a concentration of interaction.

single acts. Giddens uses the term 'reflexivity' to frame the consciously monitored and managed interrelationship between action and context. In the exercise of power, agents reproduce those institutional properties, reconstituting those assets in the course of using them. He considers not only how structures set the context within which social actors exercise freedoms in what they decide and how they act, but also how the 'agency' expressed by people itself reproduces those structures. In his words, the relationship is a 'recursive' one:

> Human social activities […] are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors. In and through their activities agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible (Giddens, 1984, p.2).

My research gathers evidence about people in positions of power and considers the effect of their choices based on their interpretations of their situations. They could have acted differently but they made choices and their actions affected outcomes. They were powerful people in 2 senses; they were in positions of authority in which they were empowered to make decisions and implement them. The power and authority were given by the positions they held within their institutions; on the other hand, they were able to mobilise the bias (Rasmussen, 2017) built into those institutions. They were powerful and knowledgeable agents who knew how to make use of resources, to draw upon the structured properties of the social systems in which they operated.

Giddens builds on Schutz's (1932) concept of 'stocks of knowledge' that can inform practical action. Much of this knowledge is practical, drawn upon by an agent but not consciously so, much in the way that Schon (1983) talks about the tacit knowledge of the professional or technical expert. I build, below, on the idea of plans as 'authoritative texts' which in various ways might be considered part of the armoury of the 'stocks of knowledge' available to and drawn upon by powerful people engaged in the regeneration of the Lea Valley. Moreover, this stock of knowledge is 'mutual' in the sense that it is available between individuals and is drawn upon by them as a social resource.

4.8 Reflexivity

It flows from my interpretivist epistemology that social phenomena are interactive. In my research, the people I have studied are invariably affected by relationship between them and me as a researcher, given that our relationship was predicated on our working together. In this case, I cannot be neutral and cannot produce an objective or 'privileged' account. My findings are mediated through my outlook and values: they are 'value-mediated' (Ormston et al., 2014, p.8).

My personal involvement in the field, first and foremost as a working professional who had played a historical role in the developments I was researching, inevitably distorted my research data in ways that were potentially both positive and negative. On the one hand, I had privileged access as an insider to people; my relationships allowed me access to their stories and our mutual knowledge of past events encouraged an intimacy and idiosyncrasy in what was brought to mind in our conversations and recollections. I had access that would be difficult for many others to secure. On the other hand, my pre-existing relationships meant that it would be impossible to establish neutrality in the interview context. What was said would inevitably be shaped by the pre-formed relationships I had made with those being interviewed. I worked in a political, institutional context fraught with tensions and competition and sharp divergences in interests and interpretations of events and strategy. I could not avoid bringing my prior interpretation to the table, even in listening to the words of others. Nor could they in any easy sense avoid talking to me as though we were still in our previous roles, even now as they were remembered. As friendly, generous and professional as my respondents were, there was perhaps unavoidable scope to reignite passions, and on occasions bring to mind old wounds or unsettled scores. My personal investment (Roberts, 2002, p.14) undoubtedly formed part of the context for the interviews, affecting their outcome. This underlined the need for me to adopt a reflexive approach to the research, seeking to be self-conscious in my interpretation of data. I seek to acknowledge my dual role as a practicing professional and researcher, which shapes interpretation of the data. I also acknowledge an autobiographical dimension to my research. My pre-existing relationships with others in the field no doubt shaped their responses in interviews and more generally the interpretations they offered me. In this sense, the texts derived

from interviews are 'mutually constructed' (Roberts, 2002, p.79) and my selection of extracts, and the choices I make to weave them into a story, mean I am implicated in this act of construction even where I am apparently reporting on the speech of others.

All but 2 of the people I interviewed had been professional associates of mine in the period 1998 to 2006. Of these, I had remade professional acquaintances with 6 individuals since my return to working in the Lea Valley from 2010 onwards. For many of the people I interviewed, our meeting had the character of old friends meeting up and reflecting on the past. I experienced warmth from old colleagues based on memories of shared involvement in the battles and struggles of a time that had profound public consequences. People readily agreed to meet and be interviewed and while I cannot be sure, they appeared to enjoy the chance to talk, and offered a huge amount of insight with limited prompting. My estimation is that the warmth I experienced was shared by a good number of the people I met. What was the source of that warmth? My reflection is that I enjoyed meeting old colleagues and be reminded of good relationships, and the experience enabled us to validate our roles: people reminded me, explicitly and implicitly, that I had made a contribution and in various ways what we had done together mattered. I was ready to return such compliments, not least because they authentically reflected my sentiments.

Equally, these sentiments, based on an idea that 'we made it happen', were precarious. The fact is that I left the project in 2006, six years before the Games were held and even though I returned four years later my relationship shifted from a central role to a marginal one. One person said in an interview that a few people were critical to the delivery of this project, and I interpreted his comments as being directed at those people involved in the delivery of the Park after I had left the area in 2006. His comment underlined my personal sense of loss at not securing an ongoing role after I worked on the spatial masterplans in the Olympic bidding phase. Many others lost position in more profound ways en route. One person I interviewed lost his post, despite him being widely acknowledged as the principal party in delivering the site for the Games. Another was a lonely champion for the Games, in the period before the Games, who slipped away from the leadership limelight as the delivery bodies were created. A senior figure in the British Olympic movement, he played a critical role in bringing the Games to east London and earned the local epithet 'John the

Baptist' for his role as an itinerant but determined preacher of the value of the Games. Wider stories of 'loss' and of 'loss and return' were told by people who were bruised along the way amid the wholesale restructuring of the institutional arrangements as the Government and the Mayor of London determined how the Olympic Park would be designed and constructed. Given this, and especially given the hunger for validation, it is impossible to claim objectivity in the stories shared among the battle-worn. In the discussion of my findings, I draw conclusions about the role of narrative in transporting stocks of knowledge (Schutz, 1932). My claims need to be mediated by acknowledgment of the ways the stories I collected performed as sources of validation in the interview context. As a researcher, I enjoyed being welcomed back.

Thus, there was a nostalgic dimension that coloured the inter-subjective quality of the interviews. If I had been sufficiently reflective at the time of the interviews in 2015, I could have pursued this harder with the participants, and in my conceptual work at the time. With hindsight, I propose, this nostalgia, a sentiment I shared, relates to the memory of the binding together of a group of professionals who, because of their senior positions, were more able, relative to more junior staff, to control the product of their work: it is true that 'a few people made this happen'. It is an expression, I suggest, of the collective identity fostered in relation to the 'mutual knowledge' secured by the development and delivery of the Games. As a reflection on the quality of the data gathered through interviews, I suggest that the camaraderie among colleagues, not necessarily in the foreground in the cut and thrust of office life, may have sometimes resulted in a tendency towards being generous, uncritical and un-combative in the context of the interviews.

A second factor that shaped the outcome of the interviews was my mixed identity as both a professional and a researcher. This almost certainly led to assumptions being made on both sides about shared meanings and values. This is another sense in which the interviews were exercises in the co-construction of data; they were exercises in generating mutual recollections of a period by the professionals involved. This affected the nature of the body of interview transcripts that formed a large portion of my research data. Our relationships meant there was an inevitable tendency for respondents to treat me as a former professional first and a researcher second and to

use the associated rhetoric. The steps I took to allow, as far as I could, respondents to talk freely in their own terms is described in 5.9 below.

I maintain a critical and reflexive stance in relation to my own assumptions and outlook, given my role as a professional immersed in the field, and thereby a participant in the ongoing reproduction of the planning and regeneration cultures I am studying. I acknowledge the diversity of theoretical positions and the ambiguities in communicative planning theory that lead Brand & Gaffikin to the conclusion that it 'can be all things to all people and thereby difficult to critique' (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p.285). Brand and Gaffikin's observation draws on their review of theories of collaborative planning; it is also a guiding maxim to carry into my reflection on my research findings. Multiple meanings are at play and, while I cannot do anything but impose my own interpretations on texts and the speech of others, I can be reflexive in the sense of being self-aware of the assumptions and framework I bring to that interpretation, and to seek out the interpretations of those I have interviewed and sought to understand in this research.

4.9 Considering alternative methodological choices

Here I consider some alternative choices of methodology that were available, cross-referenced against the choices I made as my research evolved. As discussed above, my position as a professional presented me with the opportunity for insider research and the ethnographic dimension of my methodology flowed from this. I arrived at the focus on narrative in planning through reflection on my professional experience. Many theorists and practitioners have adopted a normative commitment to collaborative planning and to the use of narrative strategies in planning practice, as discussed in chapter 2. There was a gap in academic writing in this aspect of planning and regeneration in the Lower Lea.

I could have framed my research differently, with consequences for my methodology. Had my question focused on the impact of the Games measured against its promise of legacy, a greater attention to quantitative issues may have been necessary. At one point I considered introducing a comparative dimension to the research, drawing on some relationships I had built with Shanghai in China. This would have had

implications for the scale and specification of the study, as well as requiring me to carefully set up the qualitative study in each place in a way that would enable comparison. I rejected the option because it would have been difficult to establish the control over the conditions for comparison and, in any case, it was impractical to spend the time and finances necessary to work in China. I considered framing my research more explicitly as a case study, as indeed it is. However, as I answered the question 'case of what?', it became clear that the ethnographic and narrative dimensions of the methodology already provided a sufficient framework. Similarly, I could have adopted an ethnographic methodology without a making a tie to narrative analysis; I could have chosen a discourse analysis methodology. In practice, narrative analysis was a legitimate option that allowed me to analyse data generated through ethnographic fieldwork, and a particular method for analysing discourse.

I could have adopted a different approach to studying spatial planning. An alternative study may have addressed the wide range of functions of plans, exploring the nature of planning practice in a comprehensive way, and from this exploring the particular role that narrative plays in the wider context of the professional culture. This would have implied focusing on a small number of plans and appraising their purpose and effectiveness across a range of functions and outcomes, with the implication that I would have adopted a mixed methods approach. I would have to have studied a small number of plans in a limited time frame to deliver the task with the time I had available. This would have made it impossible to secure the benefits of the longitudinal approach I took, studying the flow of narrative over a 20 year period.

Adopting a narrative analysis methodology meant I committed to a steep learning curve. An important contextual point for my choice was that my supervisor is a practicing narrative analyst. She gave me invaluable guidance, and I developed my confidence and competence through 'learning by doing' combined with study. I acknowledge that I made these choices incrementally rather than via a well-articulated research design at the outset. There is a wide range of approaches to narrative analysis that can be taken. The next paragraph describes some choices I made within the genre of narrative inquiry: each choice implies the rejection of its alternative.

These brief comments show that I made choices among a diverse range of strategies for conducting narrative analysis. One alternative might have been to focus on a very small number of respondents and adopt a biographical approach (Roberts, 2002), telling stories of their experience (Riessman, 2008). My choice rules out (benefits from these) but enables me to convey a sense of the polyphonic character (Bakhtin) of storytelling as planning narratives evolved. Another choice may have been to have radically reduced the amount of text I worked with and carried out a much more detailed structural narrative analysis of smaller units of text. This may have enabled me to analyse literary features such as the structure of language and the use of rhetoric. My chosen analytic strategy is not sufficiently fine-grained to make the most of such opportunities, but the use of a large body of data (140,000 words of transcript and 10 plans) did enable me to seek out and analyse patterns occurring at the macro scale.

My conclusions are interpretive in that I collect data and bring my meanings to them. In keeping with the ethnographic method adopted, I have been able to make use of quotes and descriptions to convey nuances and texture. My interpretation of the data has generated a descriptive account. By pursuing a categorical-content analysis, I have constructed a conceptual framework that seeks to be explanatory. In particular, I draw a conclusion that narrative themes are looser than planning policies and play a role in the dynamic world of generating and communicating ideas when used skilfully by fleet-of-foot narrators within the community of officials. This conclusion is explanatory in character: it can be described as middle level theory. I have not attempted to use my research to generate new theory at an abstract level, though I hope to have contributed case study evidence that demonstrates the applicability of collaborative planning and associated theories.

CHAPTER 5: METHODS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed description and rationale for the methods I used to conduct my research, including data generation and analysis. I link my chosen methods back to my chosen epistemological and methodological positions.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the sources of my data. I discuss issues around my ability to access data, particularly those linked to my dual role as a professional and researcher. I outline the sampling strategies I pursued in respect of texts and interviews. I discuss the strategy I pursued for conducting the interviews and establish my analytic methods. I consider ethical issues and the quality of the research.

5.2 Data sources: overview

I collected data from 3 primary sources: texts from planning documents, transcripts of semi-structured interviews and field notes taken from participant observation. I selected and analysed a body of planning and policy documents produced between 1995 and the present day. I also interviewed twenty-five people who played significant roles as clients, authors or leading participants in the planning and regeneration process for this time period. Thirdly, I used my position as a professional in the field to enable me to act as a participant-observer for research purposes.

Most planning documents are publicly available electronically and in hard copy from planning authorities, and from publicly accessible archives. Some of the relevant documents are less easy to find and access, simply because they were produced in the past. I accessed some older documents through personal contacts with people who have kept them privately, either as archivists or more commonly as a memento of their own involvement.

5.3 Participant observation and access to the field

I returned to work on urban regeneration projects in the Lea Valley in 2010, and I formulated my research aims and objectives around 2012. My contemporary relationship with the area enabled me to pursue my research in part as a participant observer. I had to rely significantly on memories of the first and primary period of my research, though my own memories are both tempered and refreshed by the recollections of those former colleagues I interviewed. I carried out my research interviews in 2015.

From about 2010, I was immersed in the field with a dual identity as a researcher and professional, and I began to capture contemporaneous field notes. During this time, I took pains to tell as many people as I reasonably could that I was simultaneously studying towards a doctorate and also working in the area. I created notes to record observations in the field, mostly using hard copy notebooks, or 'notes' and 'word' software on a computer and an iPad; occasionally I recorded my own voice memos.

My position in the field as a professional with a well-developed network of senior contacts gave me access as an insider to the community I was studying. Merton, (1972 cited in Ahmed, 2010) argues that insider researchers have exclusive knowledge and access to the community being researched, not available, or only available with difficulty, to an outsider). My professional role and thereby an insider within the community I was studying gave me privileged access to data and experiences. In addition, I brought value to the data I was collecting through my engagement with it. My active role as a participant observer itself had a value:

> The researcher's experience of what they observe, their response to it, the physical and emotional feelings it evokes, are all part of where the value of observation lies (McNaughton Nicholls, Mills & Kotecha, 2014, p.246).

I seek to be explicit that my experience of what I saw and heard - and my response to it - has shaped, in part, the construction of data as well as my interpretation of it. I influenced the data I collected: I played an active part in shaping the collection of data in the course of my immersion in the field by influencing how people perceived and engaged with me, and by the way I selected and interpreted data; I discuss my role in

the co-construction of narrative in interviews below. I took steps to try to reduce unintentional bias arising from my position as a co-constructor of data.

5.4 Sampling strategy: creating my selected group of respondents

During investigation for this study, I conducted interviews with relevant experts and participants in strategic planning and regeneration delivery in the Lower Lea Valley between 1995 -2015. I limited my focus to senior professionals and decision makers. I 'bracketed out' the uses of narrative in the dialogic relationship between policy makers and the public (Schmidt, 2008) focusing specifically on policy-making as it developed through the interaction of policy makers and senior decision makers. My restriction of the field of research affects the findings and thereby limits the claims that I can make in my research. I had built a considerable network of contacts with past and present planning and regeneration professionals in the area over the past twenty years.

At the outset, my sample was selected by convenience sampling (Marshall, 1996; Ritchie et al., 2014, p.115), in the sense that my professional relationships provided me with a wide network of contacts and from these I selected the people I wanted to interview. My selected group are a non-probability sample in that they are not intended to be statistically representative; rather they were selected on the basis of their characteristics: namely people who were closely involved in decision making about the planning and implementation of the Lea Valley's regeneration.

I went on to construct a purposive sample (Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002, cited in Ritchie et al., 2014). In purposive sampling 'Respondents have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and questions I wish to study' (Ritchie et al., 2014, p.131). I used criteria I used to select people to approach from all of the contacts available to me. I wanted to collect data from former and present colleagues in senior positions who played leading roles in the development of plans and regeneration strategies in the Lea Valley. I concentrated first on people who were involved in those positions in the period 1995 to 2007. I was interested both in people involved in that period who subsequently left their positions, and also people who remained involved in positions

of influence and authority beyond 2007 and up to the present day. I sought people with intimate knowledge of events and processes based on their involvement in the following periods of my narrative: regeneration and plan making in Newham and Tower Hamlets 1995 to 2002; campaigning for the Olympics in the period before the Mayor committed to the scheme; decision makers and senior officials in the GLA and the LDA in the period 2002 to 2007 and other influential people from a wider network who contributed to planning and urban design in that period; people who sustained their involvement in the period 2007-2012 when new organisations were created and the Games were delivered, and finally all respondents with a range of reflections from the vantage point of the area after 2012 and up to the dates of the interviews in 2015.

My aim was to ensure that my sample provided comprehensive insight into the period up to 2007 and beyond. This meant that my sample was homogenous: my research focused on the specific group of officials within my prescribed institutional setting, thereby constituting a sub culture. Within the group there was diversity given by the different positions people held, and this was significant in my research in that it linked to my exploration of counter-narratives. My selection demonstrates the feature of 'critical or typical case sampling' (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002) 'in which cases are chosen on the basis that they specifically demonstrate a particular position or are pivotal in the delivery of a process or operation' and thereby securing data from them was 'critical' to the understanding offered by the research (Ritchie et al., 2014, p.114).

5.5 Gatekeeping and access

I was able to contact fourteen people directly by phone or email because I had current or recent professional relationships with them. For eleven people, I made contact via a colleague, a senior civil servant, who acted as a 'gatekeeper' in introducing me to people we both had worked together with in the past, but with whom he had sustained contact over recent years. In those cases, the gatekeeper, referred to in my research by the pseudonym Frank Hudson, joined in with the interviews. In some instances, Frank made initial contact to arrange appointments and then I followed up by explaining my changed position from professional to researcher and formally introducing my research. Frank is an academic and writer about the Lea Valley and, in this sense, he

had a stake in being a party to the interviews in which he took part. This was explained to the people with whom he shared in the interview conversation. I was the sole recorder of those interviews where he was present, and the holder of the transcripts produced. Frank allowed me to establish the terms of the interviews in which he participated: he acted as a respondent rather than interviewer, even though he attended a small number of the interviews. I acknowledge that Frank's presence will have influenced the form and content of the conversations.

5.6 Sampling strategy: planning documents

The documents I selected for textual analysis are intended to be a small but definitive collection of statutory plans and regeneration strategies produced for the Lower Lea Valley over the study period 1995 to 2015 (see Appendix 1). Some of the texts I used are not statutory planning documents, but they represent a distinctive step towards analysis expressed in subsequent plans or investment strategies. There are scores of studies and supplementary planning documents that inform or support the high-level plans; for practical purposes only the high-level document, rather than the suite of supporting documents, is used in the research. I selected the initial sample of documents following a literature review and the selection was based on a search of readily available sources, including planning authority archives, academic reports and other online sources. I compiled an initial list of plans and cross-referenced these when other plans were mentioned during the interviews. I therefore updated my sample of planning documents as the research progressed. These documents can be considered as 'naturally occurring data' in the sense that they exist independently of the research (Ritchie et al., 2014, p.432).

5.7 Details of the people interviewed and the distribution of the sample

Table 2 below provides details of the twenty-five people I interviewed. I have removed real names here and throughout the thesis I make use of pseudonyms to retain the anonymity of the respondents:

Names (Pseudonyms)	Relevant Positions Held	Organisation	Interview Date	Gender
Roger Kelly	Chief Executive	LTGDC	20th May 2015	M
Ben Harrison	General Manager Infrastructure & Complex Projects Director of Development - Olympics	Homes and Communities Agency LDA & ODA	28th July 2015	M
Stuart Cole	Project Director	Arup	23rd June 2015	M
Tom Mercer	Executive Director for Regeneration & Community Partnerships Chief Executive	LLDC Leaside Regeneration Ltd	9th July 2015	M
Keith Harding	Director of Strategy Programme Director, Olympic Legacy Head of Stakeholder Relations Head of Architecture and Urbanism Unit	LLDC LDA ODA GLA	28th July 2015	M
Graham Roberts	Mayoral Advisor; Deputy Chair of LLDC Board Member Mayor of London's Advisor on London 2012	GLA ODA GLA	21st July 2015	M
Kate Pearson	Head of Design & Physical Regeneration Head of Design for Olympic Legacy	LLDC GLA (DfL)	7th July 2015	F
Tony Woodhouse	Strategic Planner	GLA	14th July 2015	M
Max Campbell	Head of Design & Regeneration, London 2012	ODA	28th April 2015	M
Matthew Price	Partner Associate Director	Deloitte Real Estate	20th July 2015	M
Will Tranter	Former Planning and Regeneration Officer	Newham Council	25th August 2015	M
David Finch	MP, Secretary of State for the Environment	HM Government	8th October 2015	M
Andrew	Associate Director,	Urban Initiatives	14th July	M

Bridges	Project Director for Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan		2015	
Liz Adams	Director	Regenfirst Ltd	25th August 2015	F
	Head of Regeneration	Newham Council		
	Regeneration Adviser	Tower Hamlets Council		
Simon Dodds	Professor / Director	COMPAS research centre, Oxford University	15th July 2015	M
	Council Leader	Tower Hamlets Council		
Jeff Taylor	Councillor, and Executive Member for Regeneration & Strategic Planning	Newham Council	14th July 2015	M
	Member, Planning Decisions Committee	LLDC		
	Board Member	LTGDC		
George Wallace	Chief Executive Buildings & Places	AECOM	9th July 2015	M
	President, Project Director for LLV Masterplanning	EDAW		
Alice Stone	Director of Planning Decisions	ODA	25th August 2015	F
Scott Dawson	Head of Enterprise (Southern England & South Wales)	British Waterways / Canal & River Trust	24th July 2015	M
	Regeneration and Funding Manager	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority		
Steve Richardson	Director of City Design & Planning	LDDC	2nd July 2015	M
	Senior Architect & Planner	GLC		
Greg Wheeler	Chair	London 2012 Forum, working with LOCOG	14th July 2015	M
	Chief Executive	London International Sport		
Frank Hudson	Regeneration and Planning Advisor for Olympics and Olympic Legacy	DCLG LDA London Development Unit in GOL	18th March 2015, 30th April 2015, 10th November	M

		2015 LDDC		
Jim Barratt	Head of Policy	LTGDC (on secondment from Tower Hamlets Council / DCLG)	6th July 2015	M
Gary Russell	Director Interim Executive Director, Regeneration, Planning & Property	Regenfirst Ltd Newham Council	25th August 2015	M
Helen Barker	Mayor of London's Senior Policy Adviser Planning	GLA	21st July 2015	F

The sample comprises 21 men and 4 women and no BME representatives. I consider this to reflect the under-representation of women and ethnic minorities, and more generally the profile of those in the most senior positions during the research period, rather than a bias in my sample. The sample contains representatives from the following sectors (note that some individuals feature in more than one category and some occupied multiple positions over time):

Politicians and political advisors: 6/25

Paid employees and advisors (excluding political advisors 18/25)

Politicians and officers from local, regional and national government: 6/25

Employees and officials from non-governmental agencies: 10/25

Employees and Politicians from local government: 7/25

Employees and Politicians from the GLA/LDA: 8/25

Seniority of the sample reflected in numbers in positions higher than Head of Service 21/25 (the remainder of the sample were Heads of Service).

All interviews, apart from 5, were undertaken in public settings such as cafes, bars and restaurants. Of the other five, 2 interviews took place in their offices and 3 took place in their homes.

5.8 Conducting the interviews

I carried out interviews with these twenty-five people in convenient and relaxed settings, choosing cafes, bars and restaurants and occasionally informants' own homes or offices, replicating what is common professional practice for an informal meeting. I provided the respondents with a letter of introduction explaining the nature and purpose of the research, and all signed a form explaining the research ethics. I offered, and in some instances, people asked to see, the transcripts of the interviews. Nobody refused to participate in the research, though one email to a former colleague requesting an interview went unanswered.

I encouraged respondents to talk about their experience and involvement in the planning and regeneration process. I sought out knowledge, insight, data, nuance and perspective using a semi-structured conversational approach between interviewer and respondent, in which informants were encouraged to tell stories of what happened in their own words (Wengraf, 2001).

I began with a briefing about the research project, ethical considerations, the form and recording of the interview and the proposed use of data. The data I gathered through the interviews was generated through an inter-subjective process between myself as a researcher and what I observed (McNaughton Nicholls et al., p.245) and captured in a recorded conversation. I used semi-structured, open-ended prompts encouraging respondents to develop their own accounts, drawing on context, time and place, critical events, characters and other elements as they chose. I tried to keep a continuous flow, informed by - but not dictated by - a palette of questions I had available. I recorded interviews using a handheld tape recorder and also the voice recording software on an iPhone.

I transcribed the interviews as soon as possible afterwards, and in some cases paid others to produce first draft transcripts. Where I used others to create a draft, I would replay the interview in its entirety and check the integrity of the transcript, filling in gaps, correcting names and references and otherwise checking accuracy to the limits of my own ability. I experimented with voice recognition software but discovered that there was no substitute to constructing the transcripts manually and then editing them.

The interview guide

The interview guide draws on, reinterprets and adapts Spradley's proposals for doing ethnographic research. Spradley (1979, p. 58) promotes an approach to interviews as a 'series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants'. The interviewer directs the focus of the interview towards understanding the informant's cultural knowledge, developing rapport and eliciting information. He puts forward a schema of descriptive questions, which is adapted here for this research. Spradley suggests that the responses to Grand Tour questions 'offer almost unlimited opportunities for investigating smaller aspects of experience' (1979, p. 88). He proposes follow-up questions using the same approach of encouraging the respondent to talk in an open-ended way, now focusing on specific or smaller issues. Mini-tour questions may be framed around issues generated by responses to the Grand Tour questions or might be drawn from the researcher's knowledge of the setting. They are designed to elicit more and more specific descriptive accounts from the respondent.

The interview questions

At the outset, I prompted the respondent to describe the cultural scene or setting by asking one or more 'Grand Tour' questions, designed to encourage informants to 'ramble on and on', as Spradley would have it, eliciting descriptive accounts. In this case, the setting for planning might be understood as the Lower Lea itself, the social and political context in London and in the local area, or the institutional context within which planning was taking place.

I tailored 'Grand Tour' questions to fit the person being interviewed, and example questions are indicated below. Where questions are linked to Spradley's categories the italics, after each proposed question below, indicate his analytic category. Although the prompts below are set out as formal questions, in practice I used them as guiding themes, encouraging and steering the conversation intuitively and allowing it to take its own course:

1. Can you tell me the story of the development plans you were involved in? Tell me when you were involved, what was the process, the main issues, events, people involved? (*Guided Grand Tour*)

2. Can you describe the Lower Lea at the time when you (wrote, commissioned, helped with) the Plan? (*Guided Grand Tour*)

3. Can you tell me what the purpose of the Plan was: What battle was being fought, who were the champions and who or what were the barriers? (*Specific Grand Tour*)

4. Can you paint a picture that typifies life in [the institutional setting of the person being interviewed]? What were the major concerns and in what context did you meet and work with people to develop the plan? (*Typical Grand Tour*)

5. I picked up on themes arising from the responses to the opening questions with further '*Mini-Tour*' questions. Questions typically were framed around examples, experience, or involved asking the respondent questions about the use of terms and phrases, or references to specific experiences.

I used Mini-Tour questions to encourage respondents to describe the themes in the plans. What were the main ideas being expressed in the plans? Did those ideas draw on ideas from elsewhere or where they novel? Here, I tried to elicit descriptions of narrative themes, their internal relationships within the plans, and the sense in which they draw on wider 'key narratives' drawn from the setting, or broader 'grand narratives' from the historic and socio-economic context.

For all of the questions above, I invited people to share memories of details: to introduce colour and specificity, making their story as vivid as possible.

I went on to ask respondents questions designed to elicit specific memories of critical events and then to focus on their own *experience* of the events.

Examples were:

6. Can you recall the key moments in the development of the plan? If you were to focus on how the plan evolved our time, what were the big or small moments that you would use to set out the timeline?

7. Tell me about your story, about you experience of these events and moments? Help me to understand how you were involved. What role did you play, what did you do, and how did you feel about what happened?

I asked questions to explore and check my own memories, conversationally, asking respondents to reflect on the verisimilitude of my recollected account of events and my interpretation of them.

5.9 Narrative analysis

Lieblich et al (1998) propose that possibilities for narrative research may be positioned along two axes: whether they are concerned with form or content, and whether they adopt holistic or categorical approaches. Alleyne (2015) refers to a distinction between syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis: the former concerned with the links in a sequence of events to form a whole, the latter concerned with categories of things.

I started off my analysis by seeking out narrative themes in my data: a concern with content, what is being said as distinct from how it is being said. (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998; Alleyne, 2015.). I categorise and order themes, a form of categorical content analysis (Lieblich et al., 1998, p.112). I undertook multiple readings of texts (plans and transcripts) to pursue my first focus was on narrative themes. In this sense, I undertook a content analysis and sought out concepts via a categorical analysis. One product of this exercise can be seen in Table 3 in which I categorise and organize meta-narratives, policies and plans. This step in the analysis gave me conceptual building blocks that I could use to construct a story over time: or more simply to describe a period by making reference to the narrative themes told.

In successive readings, reflected in the sub-sections of the findings chapters, I focused on structural elements of narrative, seeking out construction of place, authorship and counter-narrative. In Lieblich's terms, this aspect of my analysis sits at the form and categorical ends of their two axes. I draw on both of these steps in my analysis, each involving categorization, one on aspects of content and the other on dimensions of structure.

Then I undertook a further step by constructing my findings in the form of a narrative, a story told over four time periods. In Alleyne's terms to do so is to engage in syntagmatic analysis: I interpreted my data, making choices and constructing findings

with reference to how they linked together so that a story unfolded over time. I make some reference to the structural characteristics of the plot in my analysis: a focus on the holistic/content ends of the two dimensions. Alleyne's point is not to make one analytic choice at the expense of another, but to be clear what analytic move is being made at any given point.

5.10 Applying structuration theory: analytic tools

Giddens characterises institutions as chronically reproduced rules and resources. In ways similar to other concepts such as 'stocks of knowledge' (Schutz, 1932), or 'background ideational abilities' (Schmidt, 2008), Giddens employs the concept of 'mutual knowledge' shared by actors in a particular social context, that we as sociological observers must uncover to describe social activity (Giddens, 1984). Variously, these ideas refer to those rules and types of knowledge actors in a given social situation share or take for granted.

Anthony Giddens considers the empirical relevance of his structuration theory and discusses how social researchers might draw upon its concepts in the last chapter of 'Constitution of Society' (1986) and later in 'Structuration Theory: past, present and future' (1991). He proposes that his concepts should be considered as 'sensitising devices' (Giddens, 1991, p.213). He counsels against importing his theory wholesale; rather, he suggests that researchers use concepts sparingly or critically. Following Giddens' guidance in this respect, I draw on structuration theory to provide three sensitising concepts for my research. I apply Giddens' idea of institutional analysis, following Patsy Healey's extensive application of this framework to the field of spatial planning. Giddens defines institutional analysis as 'social analysis which places in suspension the skills and awareness of actors, treating institutions as chronically reproduced rules and resources' (Giddens, 1984, pp. 7560-7561). Further, I adopt the concept of locale, which Giddens defines as a 'physical region involved as part of the setting of interaction, having definite boundaries which help to concentrate interaction in one way or another'. I use the term 'place' in my research but draw on Giddens' concept of locale to develop a sense of place, both as setting and also as a concentration of particular kinds of interaction. Place, as I use the term, carries this social meaning given by Giddens' concept of locale, which I take to be different from

the idea of space, used to denote locational or physical attributes[5]. The Lower Lea as a place, or locale, is associated with the concentration of spatial planning and urban regeneration, and associated meanings have been promulgated and adopted by officials, but increasingly these meanings have infused the more popular and public discussions of the Lea Valley. Thirdly, I take from Giddens the idea of 'mutual knowledge', which he defines as knowledge of 'how to go on' in forms of life, shared by lay actors and sociological observers; the necessary condition of gaining access to valid descriptions of social activity (1984, p.7570).

Taking these concepts together, I aim to show how Giddens' concept of reflexivity can help me develop an understanding of how, in the course of making plans for the future of the Lower Lea Valley, actors not only make choices that are framed by the circumstances of the social context (the economic, social and political reality of the time) but also *actively reproduce and generate* structure in the course of making the plans. I deploy institutional analysis in Giddens' sense of seeking out 'rules and resources' that are both used knowingly and also 'chronically reproduced' in planning practice. I take Giddens' concept of 'locale', for which I use the term 'place' and borrow from Giddens the notion of a 'concentration of interaction'. I apply this meaning to my exploration of the concentrated interactions in the sphere of planning and regeneration, which have become very publicly attached to our understanding of the Lea Valley. Through my data gathering and analysis, I seek empirical evidence of the phenomena of mutual knowledge, that body of tacit knowledge shared in the community of planners and regeneration practitioners.

5.11 Authoritative texts

Rasmussen (2017) makes a distinction between formal and informal authoritative texts. Adopted Plans are by definition formal texts: they are legal policy documents that contribute to the policy framework used to determine planning decisions and thereby to shape developments. However, our understanding of official policy documents cannot be contained simply within the rational-technical lens. We might ask: what are the more informal dimensions of formal plans?

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[5] It should be noted that others use space to denote social meanings. Here I am merely stating the convention I follow in my use of the term.

One way of unpacking the more informal dimension of a formal plan is to interrogate the various exchanges that took place in the evolution of the documents that were finally adopted as legally binding policies. As official documents, plans might be considered as crystallised expressions of approved meanings and purposes. This begs the question about how plans evolve and are shaped through the processes of drafting and testing. The counter-narrative lens 'highlights the struggles over meanings, values and identities that take place in organizing' (Mumby, 1987, cited in Frandsen, Kuhn & Wolff Lundholt, 2017, p.3). The process through which the approved plans emerge involves dialogue, experimentation and contestation: '…meaning is always contested, when different organizational actors and stakeholders cross their (narrative) swords in the aim of shaping their collectives' identities, values and interests' (Frandsen et al., 2017).

A second way in which we might seek out the informal aspects of plans is to consider the many ways in which their claims gain authority. One dimension of the process of plan making is the process of codification and substantiation necessary for a plan to pass the 'tests of soundness' (DCLG, 2012). Propositions in plans must, after all, be grounded in evidence and defended at Examination in Public in front of the Government's Planning Inspector prior to adoption. After adoption, when individual applications have been determined, policies will be subject to rigorous contestation by appellants in the planning appeals process. Given this, plans tend toward the rational-technical, with strategic values and principles wrapped up in the requirements of the Government's planning policy framework (DCLG, 2012). This begs the question about the wider work that plans do to motivate and inspire their various readers, to promote intentions and aspirations among investors, developers, local businesses and residents, and not least, the community of stakeholders who engage directly in the planning process as contributors and authors. If plans express Aristotle's rhetorical appeal of *logos* in their rational-technical coherence, do they also succeed by engaging emotions and drawing on the authority of their authors? Do they deploy strategies of *pathos* and *ethos*?

Rasmussen's concept of the *authoritative text* overcomes the apparent binary between the official narrative, a dominant narrative endorsed by those in authority, and

counter-narratives, authored in various ways by those who explicitly or implicitly reject the official version of events. While this binary is writ large in relation to the idea of Olympic legacy, with its claims championed heroically by the authorities and challenged by an array of critics (Cohen & Watt, 2017), the binary of narrative/counter-narrative draws attention away from the ways in which official stories are themselves the product of tensions, conflicting ambitions based on multiple readings of the context and priorities for change.

5.12 Conclusions: my approach to analysis

To summarise my approach to analysis: I map out themes in plans, looking for connections, relationships and the evolution of ideas over time. I draw selectively on the material from my interviews to construct a story of the planning of the Lower Lea, sub-divided into sections by time. I analyse the story, seeking out (1) how the idea of 'place' is constructed; (2) how the identities of authors and agents are constructed and (3) the presence and relevance of counter-narratives within a body of multiple stories. Finally, I make a second round of analysis, further reflecting on my emerging ideas to focus on (4) how plans and their development express the mutual reinforcement of structure and agency, or structuration, being sensitive in my analysis to institution, locale and mutual/stocks of knowledge; (5) how narrative themes perform as 'stocks of knowledge' in the dynamic institutional context (discussed at 2.7), in which I explore the interplay between planning and the 'background ideational abilities' drawn on by individuals in their institutional settings and finally (6) returning to the theme of place, apply the concept of urban mentality (discussed at 2.8) to ask how all of my analysis of plan-making in its discursive and institutional context finds its way into an 'urban mentality' or meanings attached to the idea of the Lower Lea Valley.

5.13 Ethical considerations

I obtained ethical approval to undertake the research from the University of Salford's Research Ethics Committee. Prior to undertaking the interviews, respondents were given verbal information regarding the purposes of the research and were also required to read the information sheet and give 'informed consent'. They were given the opportunity to discuss any concerns that they had before agreeing to take part.

Research participants were also given the opportunity to read the transcripts to their interviews and forwarded them where they were requested. All respondents were asked to sign the consent form as evidence that they gave their consent for me to use the information they gave me for my research. They understood that they had the opportunity to withdraw consent at any time. I removed respondents' names from the transcripts and gave them pseudonyms.

5.14 Quality in qualitative research

Criteria for the integrity of qualitative research are necessarily different from that for quantitative research, given the emphasis on interpretation and unique circumstances of a complex social situation that would render positivist criteria inappropriate. While quantitative research seeks to eliminate subjectivity, the subjective interpretations of the actors and the subsequent interpretation by the researcher is central to the proposed research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer criteria for establishing trustworthiness in these circumstances and, in the table below, I compare their recommendations with my own practice. I adopted their recommendations in the following ways. I made a detailed capture and recording of field notes and built an audit trail of sources for claims made in the narrative accounts. I offered respondents the opportunity to review interview transcripts and shared transcripts where this was requested following the interview. I employed the use of member review, taking advantage of checking of data evidence and analysis with informed members of the community being studied; and peer review, checking overall credibility with a number of counterparts during the mature stages of the analysis. In particular, I drew on readings of drafts by 3 people who were peers during the research period but who were not sources of my primary research data. The dinner debates I organised during my research, and the informal discussion around them, gave me opportunities to informally test out my draft ideas and analysis in a peer milieu.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS 1995 – 2002

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description and analysis of the evolution of planning and regeneration policies and practice in the study area between 1995 and 2002. First, I set the scene. Section 6.2 is an account of the narrative constructions of 'place' in this period. Section 6.3 explores authorship and agency, considering who were the people making things happen and how they, and my respondents, framed their ability to act within the institutional context of the period. Section 6.4 probes the play of counter-narratives arising from tensions and conflicts and communicated in the stories told. Description and interpretation are co-constructed by me as the researcher and by the respondents. I allow multiple voices to intertwine. Longer excerpts from transcripts are presented as text within a square frame; shorter statements are presented as indented text; phrases are quoted within the body of my text. In analytical terms, the findings here, and in the subsequent three chapters, represent the product of multiple readings for categories of place, agency and authorship and counter-narrative. I tell the story chronologically and seek to maintain the flow to construct a narrative whole across the four chapters from six to nine.

In planning terms, the Lower Lea Valley had already been identified by the mid 1990s as an area of opportunity. Government strategic guidance 'The Thames Gateway Planning Framework: RPG9a' (DoE, 1995) had identified the wider region as the 'Thames Gateway' growth corridor. Within RPG9a, Stratford was identified as a western focus of the growth corridor with considerable development potential. Building on this, strategic guidance for London planning authorities noted:

> … parts of the capital had been left with worn out buildings, large tracts of derelict land and outdated infrastructure, and identified a number of areas, mainly in the Lea Valley, that contained large sites for redevelopment (GOL, 1996).

Stratford and the Lower Lea was identified in RPG3 as a strategic regeneration location (GOL,1996). Further attention to the potential strategic role of the Lower Lea was given by the Government's designation in RPG9a as one of the UK's most

important areas of development. Thames Gateway, the new government brand for the area formerly known as the East London Corridor, was:

> an area of opportunity; at the threshold of Europe's largest city and of the expanding continental marketplace …between the heart of London, Europe's leading business centre, and the heart of the newly unified and expanding European market (DoE, 1995).

The report notes that 'the Channel Tunnel is now open, and key decisions on the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), through Thames Gateway and into central London, are in place' (DoE, 1995, p.2). The first of the objectives, setting the narrative context for development, was to 'improve economic performance, enhancing London's position as a major World City' (DoE, 1995, p.3). The Thames Gateway designation underlined the significance to London forecast development of where the next phase of development beyond Canary Wharf might take place within the London portion of the growth area. The Lower Lea jostled for position among so-called 'zones of change' with the Royal Docks, Greenwich Peninsula and the land around the Ford Factory in Dagenham, all former industrial locations that could accommodate housing and commercial development as part of London's eastward growth. Echoing the designation in Government policy guidance, the London Planning Advisory Committee, an ad-hoc body that had been established as collaborative body supported by London Planning Authorities following the abolition of the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1986, had identified the Lower Lea Valley as an 'East London Development Focus' in the mid 1990s. The designation which amounted to little more than the imposition of a diamond-shaped boundary over a map to indicate an area with potential to accommodate growth and development given the decline of the industrial base in the area. The local interpretation of that designation was left to local authorities; consequently, boroughs developed separate plans for those parts of the Lower Lea falling within their boundaries. These are discussed below.

6.2 Narrative constructions of the Lower Lea as a place 1995-2002

The discursive constructions of the Lea Valley in this period all focused on the challenges that had to be overcome if the area's potential was to be unlocked. As well as dereliction and pollution, an over-riding descriptor for the area was one of fragmentation; the Valley separated from residential communities by roads and railways, land parcels separated from each other and from the wider area by intersections of roads, railways and numerous meandering river courses over the flood plain. What were infrastructure assets in previous times, like the overhead power lines, now appeared as inhibitors to the area's redevelopment. Beauty and interest was to be found, but it was hidden and available only to a knowing few who explored and fell in love with the idiosyncrasies of this liminal space; most would never stop in the area or venture beyond well-trodden routes.

Within the government sectors, a commonly held view was that the Lower Lea was too difficult a place to attract investment and development. LDDC's redevelopment of docklands had reached a mature phase in Canary Wharf by the mid 1990s and London's second major finance and business services district was well established and growing. This only served to emphasise the contrast with impoverished east London. LDDC's brief could have been extended to allow it to intervene in the degraded Lea Valley. Indeed, the Corporation had already bought one large tract of land on the east side of the river bank, creating Cody Road Industrial Estate as a relocation area for industrial businesses forces to move away from the Isle of Dogs to make way for commercial development. LDDC's assessment was that it would be too difficult to attract high value development to the Lower Lea. A huge amount of subsidy would be needed to assemble development land given how fragmented land ownership was there. Extensive use of CPO powers would be necessary for an extremely laborious process involving considerable compensation costs for displaced businesses. Land assembly costs would be matched by onerous subsidies for infrastructure and public realm improvements.

> Jim excerpt 1
>
> There was a study commissioned by the Docklands Development Corporation and the Department of Environment, which was never published, to consider whether the Lower Lea

Valley should be designated as a part of the Docklands Development Corporation area. The report basically said, 'don't go there, it's too difficult'. Anyway, there's no future in the Lower Lea Valley and Stratford in terms of marketability or anything, so there's no point. The boroughs wouldn't have wanted it anyway. Tower Hamlets was at war with LDDC at the time. So, the LDDC didn't go there: they left it.

So, the Lower Lea Valley was ignored by the government agency that had been set up to redirect London's growth eastwards: the one agency that at the time had the powers and resources necessary to overcome the barriers to land and property development. Newham Council's policy of dealing with 'eyesores' - abandoned or derelict properties - communicated a commitment to changing conditions, but it did suggest that the negative perceptions of the area were grounded in reality. The Valley and its adjacent neighbourhoods were forgotten, hidden or ignored until the local authorities began to champion their change. If there was a mentality of this period, it was that 'Newham is somewhere in Essex' and that 'Canary Wharf is nothing to do with us'. There were two worlds hermetically sealed from each other: affluent Docklands and impoverished outer east London, the latter a sub region considered to be peripheral, suburban and largely problematic.

Liz excerpt 1

In my early days in Newham, I'd be saying to people "there is this brilliant site" and they would say, 'where is Newham? Isn't it in Essex? It's a long way away'. And I would say, 'you get on a train to Liverpool Street and it's ten minutes on the train to Stratford. Or get the central Line to Stratford; it hardly takes any time at all.' All they would know was West Ham United, and if you were lucky and they were a bit more middle class, they would know the Theatre Royal Stratford East. They were the only 2 things they knew.

Stratford and east banks of the Lower Lea: constructions of place identity

Stratford Town Centre to the north and east of the Lower Lea Valley was an identifiable place with a presence in its own right; it would soon be constructed as a part of the Lea Valley in the Council's Arc of Opportunity plans, described below. However, the external perception that the Lea Valley was perceived as an awful place was equally applicable to Stratford, with some justification according to my respondents' accounts.

In the mid 1990s, however, an investment and development narrative for Stratford was proceeding under its own steam. Early efforts to put Stratford on the 'mental maps' of the government and the civil service were evident in the work to bring rail infrastructure to the area. The early proposal for the CTRL, connecting London to Paris and the rest of Europe, was for a route through Kent and south London into central London. Conservative Minister Michael Heseltine, followed by Labour Minister John Prescott, supported by Mark Bostock of ARUP Engineering Company, ran a successful campaign to re-align the route into London so that it would run through Stratford and potentially create access to substantial areas of rail lands that had become redundant and now stood available for redevelopment. Newham Council, along with cities in the Midlands who saw the potential for further connections northward, joined in with the campaign.

The Council struck up work with a consortium led by London & Continental Railways to secure the development of a station at Stratford on the CTRL route and to bring forward a major development project, Stratford City, on the rail lands. The development land, before it was branded as Stratford City, was known locally in the planning community as the 'Teardrop Site' because of the shape of the land parcel contained within a constellation of railway lines. London & Continental Railways, through their senior officers, appointed Chelsfield and Stanhope as development partners and the consortium began to work collaboratively with the Newham planners to bring forward the Stratford City planning application. There would be a nine-year period between the Transport and Works Act to approve the CTRL project, in 1996,

through to the application to grant planning consent to the proposed Stratford City scheme that secured planning permissions in 2005. It is evident that that the decision to put a station at Stratford, championed by Minister Michael Heseltine with the active support of Newham Council, was a critical step in changing the perception of the area as a place that could attract major investment and development.

However, the Council's efforts to improve the area in ways that reflected their new-found ambition for quality constantly ran up against the wider negative perceptions of the place and its people.

Alice excerpt 2

When the Jubilee Line extension was coming through to Stratford and there were the various station designs along the route. The [London] Docklands Development Corporation was doing great things at Canada Water. Even at Canning Town there were plans for an interchange with the bus station. They got to West Ham and the brief to the architects was that it had to be vandal proof because it's horrible round here and they are a bunch of oiks. Great.

The two major planning stories of the Lower Lea written in this period, one commissioned by the London Borough of Newham (2002), and the other written by Leaside Regeneration Company (2001) in Tower Hamlets, both imagined the Lower Lea as a challenge to prevailing misperceptions about east London and east Londoners: dreams of an emerging new world. The plans sought to overturn the given reputation of the place and the people. Both acts of planning were active attempts to learn about the potential of the Lea Valley and to codify its possibilities. In different ways, these stories sought to turn around the fate of the Valley.

Newham Council was strident in its work to attract inward investment and property development. The local authority's plans identified the major areas of development potential. In this way, Stratford, with its abandoned rail lands, the Lea Valley with its low grade industry, and the Royal Docks were conceived of as a single, identifiable zone in the west and south of the borough with major land parcels that could be redeveloped. Stratford and the Lower Lea were imaginatively constructed in the planning rhetoric as localities connected within a single zone of change: an 'Arc of

Opportunity'. Newham's plans challenged the idea that the Lea Valley was suburban, peripheral, and thereby irrelevant to the growth of urban London. The Arc proposals sought to 'put Newham on the Map'.

What was the place identity of the Arc, as the area was now being constructed? The plans emphasised the Lea Valley's hidden place qualities, using the metaphor of nature and water as rebirth to create a story of a landscape of opportunity, connected in to London and Europe by improving transport connections. However, the dissonance between the present and the imagined future was evident. Newham officers, looking at the Lea Valley from their perspective, spoke of a place 'with no identity'.

> **Alice**
>
> It was a complete bloody wasteland before City Challenge. But if you look at it now, it's fundamentally changed. Whether the local people have benefited from it, is another matter.

The west banks of the Lower Lea: constructions of place identity

The Lea River forms the eastern boundary of the Borough of Tower Hamlets. In Tower Hamlets, politicians were mostly concerned with the west of the borough, the fringe of the City of London and the place with a high concentration of Bangladeshi residents, and with Canary Wharf. It was striking that this was an area of both incredibly rapid change and fantastic potential. There was a dissonance between a place that could be global in its outlook, given the possibilities of Canary Wharf's international markets, CTRL's European connections and London's requirements to grow. By contrast, the political traditions in Tower Hamlets were beset with parochial concerns; the Bangladeshi community was still deeply embedded in Bangladesh via family ties, economic responsibilities to wider families and the social and political life there: these issues were all material to life in Tower Hamlets, where competition for housing and other resources was severe (Dench, Gavron & Young, 2006). The brownfield land on the River Lea offered a possibility to replace the declined industry, and to think what form new economy might take, one that could generate both real economic growth but also some form of redistributive benefit for the local communities. But the identity of the area was weak and there were no strong policies

capable of driving change. A former councillor described the east of Tower Hamlets as a 'tabula rasa':

Simon excerpt 1

The most striking thing to somebody coming in from the outside was quite how parochial the politics was. But there also was a sense, actually, in the River Lea, that you could adopt a tabula rasa rhetoric, where the east was desert space, where investment could find its place, and you could reconstruct things.

We already had Cityside Regeneration in the west of the borough and London Docklands at Canary Wharf in the south. We decided to set up the urban regeneration company Leaside Regeneration to focus on the east of the borough. We wanted to put our flag in the ground.

Hence it was a political initiative to form the Leaside Regeneration Company. However, some of its officers were alarmed when the agencies outside the Council began to write plans themselves - 'it was impertinent'. The Leaside Plan (2001) told a new story of the people of east London, recasting them from the role of victims of deprivation and turning them into entrepreneurs in a place of opportunity. At a time when 'civilisation hadn't quite discovered the Lower Lea yet' the Leaside Plan re-imagined the relationship between the lives of deprived east Londoners and the opportunities of growth, in a way that challenged the assumption that 'Canary Wharf is nothing to do with us'.

6.3 Narrative constructions of agency and authorship 1995-2002

The Lea Valley was a place with regeneration and development potential. This section outlines how a significant group within government circles opted out of taking action here to unlock that potential, based on their appraisal of the prohibitive barriers that existed, while local leaders stepped forward and were pragmatic in their approach to making change. Confidence grew over time, and Newham representatives were progressively emboldened in their ability to influence and negotiate agreements with developers. They went on to author an over-arching story of ambition for the Lea Valley. Across the river in Tower Hamlets, the Council created a regeneration company and its partners began to develop a story for the whole of the Lea Valley.

The prevailing view in senior circles was that the Lea Valley was a lost cause as a place for public intervention to enable investment and development. Powerful people from government and across London were not focused here: Docklands had a huge area of derelict land in public ownership, a dedicated agency (LDDC) with powers and resources backed by national government and major corporate backers; the Lower Lea was off-centre, polluted, its ownership fragmented and altogether it was an unattractive place for investors:

> **Jim**
> What's interesting is that there's lots of examples right through the history up to now where there was a general feeling amongst the good and the great, the dinner party lot, you know, who decided what policies were going to happen, but the Lower Lea Valley and Stratford were just awful places, and it was never going to happen.

Newham Council set out to change perceptions by making things happen in a piecemeal way through tenacity and pragmatism: their strategy was to 'beg, borrow and steal'. Confidence grew as small and significant victories were won, and the Council succeeded, notably in working with Cabinet Member Michael Heseltine on the proposal to bring the CTRL to Stratford, and progressively winning battles to attract investors, despite the London-wide perception that Newham was suburban, ugly and irrelevant. Newham Council told their story of opportunity to everyone they could get to listen. Theirs was an underlying pragmatism in the culture of the Council's planning and regeneration officers. They grabbed opportunities when they presented themselves. Fundamentally they wanted to reach positions of consensus with property developers and to do deals; there was a political pragmatism in relation to development projects, notwithstanding some of the more romantic constructions of the place visions.

Alice excerpt 3

So, all the ingredients were there. We always had an overarching series of headline objectives, most of which were in planning policies and then morphed over the years, but they were all there. If someone comes along with a great idea, we'll have it. It was working on all those fronts and grabbing any money you could get from anywhere. It's about getting things to happen … cutting your cloth accordingly. You might start off asking for the unachievable,

but in arguing your way from that with your counterparts and your opposition, you actually got some common middle ground, and things started to happen. Once things started to happen there was a lot more belief and interest in the place.

The Lower Lea Valley's physical fragmentation was matched by the multiplicity of institutions and the administrative divisions between a number of local authorities. There was no institution capable of taking the overview of the whole area. Newham Council was the most strident in promoting the Valley, though the fact that it does so is experienced as a threat by some other local authorities and agencies: the 'agency' expressed by Newham only served to emphasise the fact that the Valley's institutional arrangements were as fragmented as the Valley's plots of land. Tower Hamlets set up Leaside Regeneration with a formal constitution and a brand identity that enabled it to act across the Lea Valley, and political representation from Newham Council on its board; but political reality dictated that it could only deliver programmes and projects inside the geographical area of Tower Hamlets. For this reason, geographer Peter Hall condemned the Leaside Framework as a 'lost opportunity' in Regeneration and Renewal Magazine. Despite this, Leaside Regeneration Company, an independent force, began in its own way to flex its power and, impertinently, conceived of Valley-wide proposals and published plans for the Valley as a whole despite not being invited to do so by the local authorities.

Newham Council's increasing sense of its efficacy, its agency, was expressed in its preparedness to take risks: for example, in committing to loan funding for transport improvements. The Council's ability to work in partnership with large developers, while sustaining its own independent agenda, matured in this period.

Will excerpt 1
In terms of the relationship between the developers and the planners, it was a pretty cooperative process because they saw the advantage and sense in a lot of what the council was putting forward in terms of broad strategy. We were sensible enough at that point to know that we had to have flexibility in the framework to allow them to come on board. We said: we are serious partners; you've got the money, we'd like to help shape your ideas about how we go about doing this. It was a political process and there were some heavy debates about the density of housing, lots of arguments about the viability assessment and we were

Newham Council was well organised with a strong political leadership, increasingly capable of promoting regeneration. The Council desperately needed to find ways to create jobs for Newham residents, to replace the employment base that had been lost when the docks closed and manufacturing industry left London. Newham's plans identified opportunity sites and sought new uses that would create jobs. The Council's planning officers were attuned to the culture, operations and outlook of property developers who were beginning to formulate large scale plans around Stratford Rail Lands and many other smaller but significant developments in the borough. Newham officers operating in the area in the late 1990s, worked cooperatively with politicians and developers to unlock the development potential made possible by the CTRL.

Alice excerpt 4

For the Teardrop Site in Stratford we were arguing: that's one of the bigger ones; if you can unlock that site, then the impact of development there would ripple out to the land around it, like Carpenters Road and the Marsh Gate Lane and Pudding Mill Lane and all those places, all of which are underused and contaminated and tricky. So, Newham started off this campaign and joined in with the people arguing for the CTRL to come north of the river and through Stratford. The directors and councillors all thought it was a good idea. Every politician we could persuade was taken up Holden Point (a tower block of Council housing that offered panoramic views right across Stratford, the rail lands towards central London).

Council officers anticipated that the pace of development would be slow and incremental, and necessarily aligned with market forces. The Council's programme envisaged a twenty-year development period for the rail lands, starting with the shopping centre. Commercial offices, they imagined would come forward more slowly, dependent on the cycles of the commercial office market. The housing development, they knew, would be incremental and it would take time to build a market, only releasing developments slowly so they would be absorbed quickly.

Central government experimented with new forms of organisation for urban regeneration, sponsoring City Challenge, Neighbourhood Renewal and Single Regeneration Budget, with government investment in time limited area programmes

matched by local commitments and led by partnership boards: early experiments in stakeholder arrangements that have since become ubiquitous. Newham Council was very successful at leveraging these funds into local programmes. One of these, Stratford Development Partnership (SDP), established a national reputation for its success and its Chief Executive, a former senior council officer, became a leading local figure in delivering pragmatic victories, such as the development of a new transport hub centred around Stratford Bus Interchange, a symbol and exemplar of the borough's ambition for change:

Will excerpt 2

It [Stratford] was one of the few City Challenge programmes across the UK that put together a great plan, got the money and actually stuck to their programme, time scale and budget. A company was established, Stratford City Challenge, led by Chief Executive Stephen Jacobs, and they were very good at establishing a programme and committing the money year on year, whereas a lot of other challenges were failing; they were not meeting spend. Jacobs was also exceptionally good at begging, stealing and borrowing underspends from other City Challenges. The bus station project enabled us to clear the site, on the back of architectural design. It was a pretty good striking design produced in-house by TfL for Stratford Bus Station. That led on to people then concentrating their minds around Stratford Rail Station itself.

Newham Council's officers' and politicians' growing confidence meant they were prepared to battle to change mindsets of wider public agencies, and also to take significant risks. To promote the Stratford rail station redevelopment, the Council ultimately had to borrow and invest its own funds. TfL had accepted that looking at the Jubilee Line station at Stratford needed a fundamental re-design, but they would only commit to funding their platform. At the end of the day, Newham had to actually underwrite the loan; The rationale for paying back the loan was that the Council would continue to attract transport funding from central government in future years, but this was by no means secure.

Alice excerpt 5

They came to show Will and I the designs for Stratford in a meeting. For Stratford, the design was basically a platform, a ticket barrier and a signing on block for drivers next to the

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platform. And I said, 'Well, how does anyone get to the platform?' 'Oh well, they just come through how it is now and then they climb over the concrete and brick bridge that you used to have to climb over to get to the Northern line platforms.' I think you and I together gave them a mouthful of expletives. I said, 'Bugger off, you're not getting planning permission for that. It's not accessible, that access is rubbish. You can't expect people' … Because it was a horrible ... 2 people could hardly pass on the old Northern line steps and we just said, 'No, piss off.' So, we went away to see what we could do. He said, 'I know she's being vociferous but let's see if we can sort out some kind of a deal', which you did, didn't you?

Newham's growing sense of confidence and its success in attracting interest from developers and significant backing from central government culminated in a gear change; the strategy of pragmatism was overlaid by the Council's publication of the Arc of Opportunity, a brand and promotional tool rather than a land use planning document. Newham appointed a new regeneration director in the late 1990s. She established the Arc of Opportunity as the masterplan for the Lower Lea Valley and the Royals.

Liz excerpt 2

The PR strategy was to put Newham on the map, because people never went east of Tower Bridge; you are trying to transform the image that this area was London's future and exciting things were there, with space and water and all kinds of potential that didn't really exist anywhere else. I still believe that east London has a tremendous amount going for it, but at that time the perception was absolutely negative. That's why you needed a big bang: you couldn't just do it with bits. Obviously, the Olympics took that into a different realm, but you had to do a great big thing that made people see the place differently and that was the idea of the Arc of Opportunity.

Culturally, Newham Council became increasingly literate in marketing and promotion. Their recently appointed Director of Regeneration took it on herself to rewrite promotional material that the Council took to MIPIM, the annual property development industry event at Cannes in the south of France, thereby putting the Arc of Opportunity brand at the centre of the Council's messaging. This was an innovative development in the style of public 'agency'. The graphic boards for the event were re-written and the Arc of Opportunity was launched there. Later the Council ran a design

competition, and David Mackie was appointed. He produced a water-based masterplan for the Lower Lea part of the Arc.

Liz excerpt 3

We were basically selling 'London is moving east'. We've got it all. We've got space, we've got development interest, we've got water, we've got everything you need to build a whole new place: an extension to the centre, because it's just quite close to Canary Wharf; it's only an extra little shift to shift the gravity east. And that's what we were trying to do because of all the negative perceptions of the place.

By contrast, in Tower Hamlets the main protagonists for the Lower Lea were a group of actors outside the Council, as the Council's geographical and political focus was elsewhere: on the Bangladeshi communities and the west of the borough. The political vacuum provided an opportunity for wider groups in the area to develop a collaborative style of agency within the framework plan of Leaside Regeneration (2001). Their approach exemplified a new style of agency, beyond the formal structures of local authority power. It was a local example of the New Labour concept of the social entrepreneur (Demos, 1997). Paul Brickell, Andrew Mawson, Steve Stride and Eric Reynolds took on de facto leadership in setting the agenda for change in the Lea Valley by making exemplary things happen on the ground: the development of the Bromley by Bow Centre promoting health, learning, family support and employment (Mawson) and the Trinity Buoy Wharf creative workspace development (Reynolds) being prime examples. These individuals were outliers in the sense that they did not occupy formal positions in local authorities, but they were important players in the area, with interests straddling property, business, welfare services and community life. British social policy under New Labour, in redefining the relationship between government and the public in a post-welfare state era, would increasingly privilege such 'civic entrepreneurs'.

Tom excerpt 1

We started to think about what the bigger picture could be. And we saw in HARCA[6] and Leaside [Regeneration] an opportunity. We had some ideas about Bromley-by-Bow, and then we had an inkling of this further thing that was happening. All of a sudden, from being the forgotten corner of Tower Hamlets, the Council has now cared enough about it to invent these two organisations (a housing association, Poplar HARCA, and a regeneration agency, Leaside Regeneration). We [Bromley by Bow Centre] started to talk to them but we don't know what the relationship means. How do you do physical regeneration with local people? What does all this mean? Between us, we started putting that story together. I think actually they were an extraordinary group of people, from inside and outside various camps, who were excited about and enthusiastic about this place. And civilisation hadn't quite discovered the Lower Lea Valley yet.

The artwork produced by Leaside Regeneration (see Figure 4) was the first map of the Lea Valley that showed the Lea Valley as a complete regeneration area with land in Tower Hamlets and Newham.

Tom excerpt 2

We later did the Leaside artwork [for an economic strategy]. The borough was kicking and screaming; not really joined up. I don't know if anyone in the LDA didn't think it was a good idea, and Newham didn't think it was a good idea. But I believe, and I'd like to be challenged on this, that was the first set of maps which showed the Lower Lea Valley as a whole: a map of the area that is now absolutely commonplace and we did it with all the partners kicking and screaming. That was that.

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[6] Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association, an agency that had taken over control of most of the social housing stock in the Poplar neighbourhood, on the western side of the Lower Lea, via stock transfer from Tower Hamlets Council.
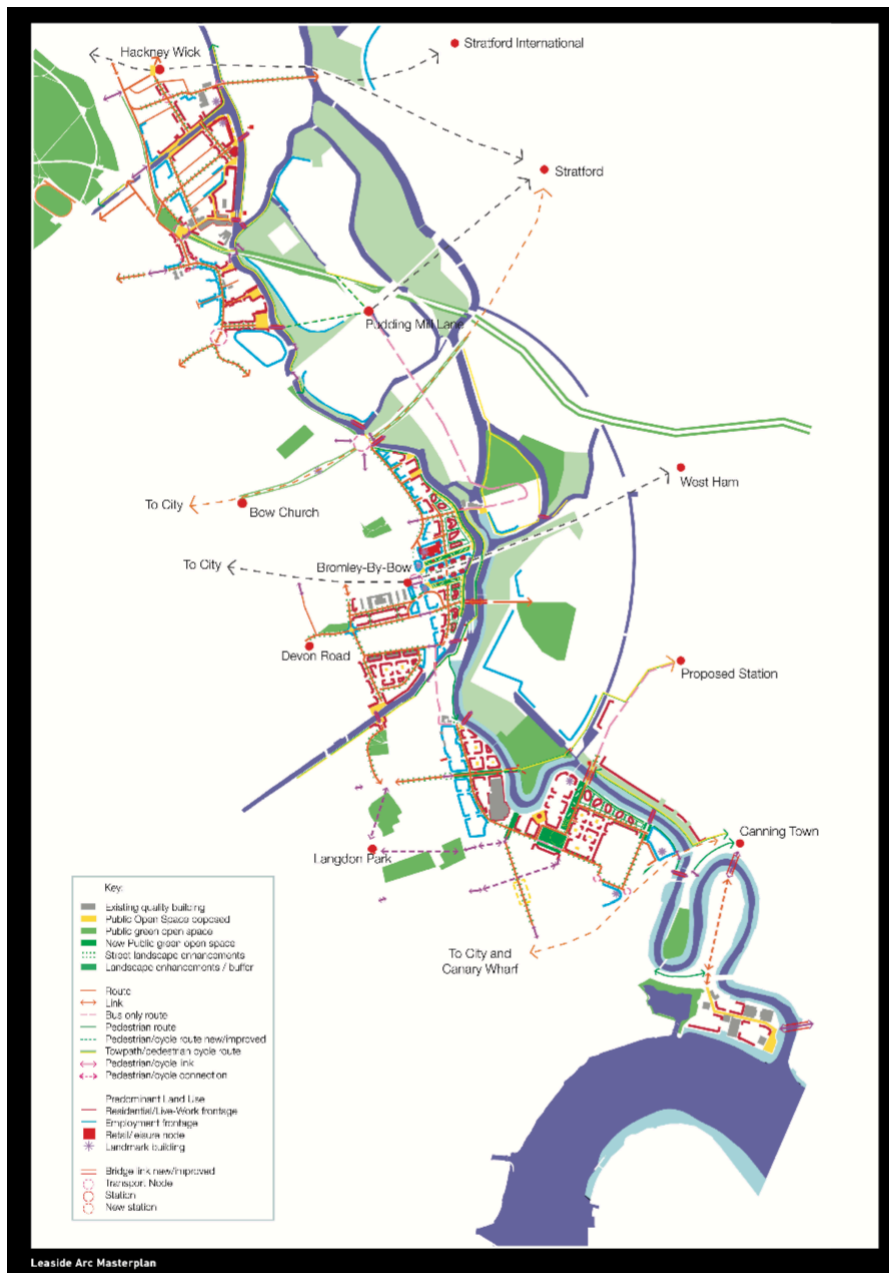
Figure 4: Leaside Arc Masterplan (Leaside Regeneration Company, c.2000s)

6.4 The play of counter-narratives in the stories of the Lea Valley 1995-2002

A challenge to the prevailing outlook that the Lower Lea was too difficult

The idea of the Lower Lea as the site for urban regeneration, as it gained ground in the mid to late 1990s, was itself a counter-narrative to the established view that new development in east London should be focused on Docklands with its established commercial and residential property markets at Canary Wharf. It was an explicit

challenge to the 'don't go there' rhetoric. Local politicians and officers were committed to improving the area, but their confidence in their abilities to secure wider interest and commitments grew slowly:

Jeff excerpt 1

The Corporation of London had announced that they wanted to move Spitalfields' fruit and vegetable market. There was also a fruit and veg market in Stratford, side of Stratford High Street, on the lands now occupied by the Jubilee line depot, but which wasn't yet in existence… the Leader of the Council at the time, along with our Assistant Chief Executive, bid to locate Spitalfields' market in Stratford. That was the first time we sought to bid to change people's minds on something. So, we assembled a site partly on land that we owned, partly land that others owned, south of Stratford. We knew that once Spitalfields moved to wherever, Stratford market would close: there was no logic of having two fruit and veg markets in east London. So, although it didn't work as a process, we didn't win, they chose to move it to Leyton, it gave us the confidence – 'actually, we can do these things'.

The counter-narrative, the development of a property market in the Lea Valley, appeared incrementally: in the way opportunities were packaged in the Newham Unitary Development Plan (UDP), in Newham's success in promoting Stratford, and in the Leaside Regeneration model that suggested that community regeneration should complement rather than compete with property development. This new narrative implied that negative perceptions of the people of east London should be challenged. The imaginative recasting of the relationship between east Londoners and new development was already taking place in London Docklands, where the developers of the Canary Wharf Group could see that east London's population potential offered a large supply of labour and consumers. Canary Wharf's developers saw that developments at Stratford could provide a gateway to markets to the east of London and beyond:

Jeff excerpt 2

And so, there was a debate as to where exactly the Jubilee Line extension would go, and we obviously got behind the Stratford one, as did Canary Wharf Limited because they could see that was where the population of young people and growth was – east of Stratford – and they wanted to link in with the eastern region of trade and movement. So, we were part of this successful argument to bring the Jubilee Line to Stratford, and that also reinforced the CTRL

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argument, and so these things were coming together.

A place for housing or a place for employment?

When the Secretary of State, David Curry, suggested that the area could be a place to make a substantial contribution to the country's need to supply housing development sites, the local politicians felt they had sufficient authority to mount a thematic counter-narrative, emphasising economic development and employment growth as their primary concern:

Jeff excerpt 3

And then in 1995 – this is a good time to start – David Curry became housing minister, and this was stuck in my memory particularly. He did this speech about delivering 203,000 new houses, the kind of speech that housing ministers often make in every era, but one of the places he specifically mentioned, or encouraged, in his speech was the Lower Lea Valley. And we all went 'hang on a minute, frankly we're not putting all this effort into the CTRL and all these other things just to cover all the land in housing'. We were looking to be an employment regeneration generator for east London as well. And so that's where we sort of doubled our efforts to think 'what will we do at Stratford, if we've got CTRL? We don't just want to cover it in housing'.

How should we lead urban regeneration?

The internal institutional life of the planning, regeneration and development community contended with evolution and change. City Challenge, the national government programme with its rhetoric of partnership, leveraging multiple sources of investment and building local place leadership capacity, was promoted as a new narrative to challenge the singular claim to leadership by local authorities:

> **Alice**
> In the early 1990s, we were successful in winning some urban regeneration investment from central government via the City Challenge programme and, through that, we delivered some significant projects. Newham Council thought, we'll go for it, we'll go for City Challenge, and it was successful.

City Challenge was an experiment in the idea of combined physical, economic and social regeneration. The language of 'bottom' up, people-based regeneration, and

social enterprise and inclusion, was born in this period. Prior to this, land and property experts in the public sector tended to sit within agencies like EP and in Development Corporations. Now individual leaders and teams in regeneration would embrace institutional cultures from a wider palette of public sector interests from land remediation through to education, access to employment and even arts and culture. In Stratford, this cultural shift was embodied in the birth of SDP as an independent body, ostensibly a challenge to the Council's hegemonic leadership. The scope for tension and conflict was mediated by the diplomacy of the Chief Executive, his close ties with the Council, and good relationships with key politicians.

Stratford City Challenge's successes were exemplified by their ability to deliver projects that changed the perception of the area; the developments provided a graphic counter-narrative to dereliction and abandonment:

> **Alice**
>
> The new bus station was one of the things. The new bus station, with its tented canopy structure, was seen as an innovative design, bright and cheerful, and it became the new poster image that you could use to advertise Stratford.

The new language of social inclusion, embodied in the rhetoric of City Challenge, is challenged by a counter-narrative of gentrification and social engineering, expressed in private but missing or latent and coded in texts, whereby Newham would attract a new middle class of in-migrators, and that this would be as important as the enrichment of opportunities for the existing population.

The New Labour Government began to forge a new political approach championed by individuals who instinctively rejected the class and power based oppositional and defensive politics from the 1970s and early 1980s. Some political activists saw, in the new forms of urban regeneration policy, an opportunity for this new politics that would ultimately blossom as New Labour thinking:

> **Tom**
>
> Canary Wharf was born in an era of banners and shouting, and everyone hated each other. At that point it was bruising; and nobody believed that Canary Wharf had

anything to do with the local community and it would be of no benefit to them, and in those early days lo and behold it wasn't, because if that's the story you tell of course that's what's going to happen.

The language of consensus began to be expressed in commitments to social enterprise by both the right and the left, not so much rejecting the impact of the market, but embracing market mechanisms and redefining them as the route out of poverty. In the same vein, politicians were explicit in welcoming middle-class in-movers into the area:

Will excerpt 3

It was much the same ambition; it was about jobs, it was about quality housing, about a broader tenure mix to change the profile of the borough. That was something the Council Leader was mad keen on. He was very blunt about it. He wanted to get the middle class in, wanted people with money in: they'll stay, they'll be the volunteers, they'll invest in the community. The key things that needed doing were improving education, improving transport, improving housing, giving more housing choice, getting the middle class in, although you don't say that explicitly. Improving education means added choice. It was about getting the middle classes in, because if you had better schools, the middle class would stay. Whereas, they might come when they are young and have no kids as it was a cheap place to live, but as soon as their kid is rising five, or even worse, rising eleven, they are going to go somewhere else that has better secondary schools.

Present day critics of the regeneration claims made in this period point to the ways market mechanisms generate and deepen social inequality; in this period the main concern, shared by Conservative and Labour politicians, was that the area would be unable to attract investment, development and middle class in-movers:

Alice excerpt 6

I suppose the only nervousness about the process was over the willingness and the ability of the market to respond. There was so much land and development coming through even with the railways alone. Who the hell else would be interested? What level of demand is there for these sites around Three Mills and Marshgate Lane? It just seemed almost over ambitious at the time but looking back now you can see it wasn't.

Pragmatic deal or branding, marketing and promotion? Or both?

The pragmatic and incremental approach to development was overlaid by the place-branding and identity-building concept of the Newham Arc of Opportunity. With hindsight, it is possible to see the extent to which the confidence and the themes in the story of the Arc were prefigured in the previous years. However, the confidence in the message, one that overturned previous official narratives, was remarkable and it did capture substantial national attention:

> **Liz**
>
> You've got to reverse all of the negative perceptions before you can make the right things happen. Anybody can just build housing blocks, but if you are going to create a different place with different qualities then you've got to change the dimensions and change the perception.

Gary excerpt 1

One of the things that was significant about the Arc of Opportunity as a concept was that up until that point there was no kind of unifying idea at all, particularly from Newham's point of view, as to what this vast sites of opportunities meant, stood for, or was communicated in any way, and Newham had a pretty poor reputation for quite a long time and I think that idea played a very big role in beginning to raise the profile of Newham, telling a story about what it was trying to achieve and what the scale of the opportunity was.

Competing geographies: Newham, Tower Hamlets or cross-boundary?

If the Newham Arc quickly became the dominant narrative at the turn of the century, suggesting that the Lea Valley's development potential was mostly contained within and defined by Newham, then Leaside Regeneration offered a counter-narrative that the Lea Valley's potential required a cross-boundary strategy and that leadership should not be vested in Newham Council alone. Many other regeneration stories vied for attention and funding in this period, for example around Hackney's concern in defending and growing the local economy in the industrial area of Hackney Wick, and Waltham Forest's interests in the industrial estates such as those around Blackhorse Lane. These schemes were examples of the many local interests who would have been threatened had Newham succeeded in stealing national attention and winning the competition for central government funding. The task of developing an overarching

narrative for the Lea Valley required resolution of the tensions given by multiple local interests.

Summary

In summary, the shifting narrative for the Lea was driven by the incremental growth in confidence among tenacious actors at the local level. Their counter-narrative, that the Lea Valley represented an opportunity, challenged the influential outlook that there were too many barriers to investment there. The success in rerouting CTRL through Stratford was a critical moment, and the emboldened local leaders began to challenge prevailing perspectives with their own narrative, advocating an economic growth vision for the area to replace the traditional docks, now closed, and the industries that had left London. As the local confidence grew, an alliance, counter-intuitive for the time, was struck up. Canary Wharf Group, imaginatively recast east London as a source of labour, consumption and market potential. They got behind the campaign to improve transport connectivity up to Stratford: they too began to tell a new story about east London as an entrance point to the regions beyond.

Leadership remained rooted in the localities in this period, and the institutional fragmentation of the Lower Lea was not overcome: the story of the Valley is authored separately in Newham and Tower Hamlets, and in other local boroughs. There was a tension about leadership style. The government sponsored partnership forms, giving funds to agencies like Leaside Regeneration and SDP. Newham a strong, well organised authority, stayed in control, while in Tower Hamlets, the looser local authority context created a space for greater autonomy and Leaside began to independently generate propositions not just for Tower Hamlets but for the Newham part of the Lower Lea too. New Labour concepts of entrepreneurship and post-welfare arrangements began to bleed into the social policy thinking, and Leaside's strategy (2001) drew on these new narratives.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS 2002 - 2007

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description and an analysis of the evolution of planning and regeneration policies and practice in the study area between 2002 and 2007. Overall, the chapter tells the story of the development of the Olympic bid from the perspective of officers inside the LDA, the GLA and the Mayor's office. Section 7.1 sets the scene. Section 7.2 is an account of the narrative constructions of 'place' in this period. Section 7.3 explores authorship and agency, considered who were the people making things happen and how they, and my respondents, framed their ability to act within the institutional context of the period. Section 7.4 probes the play of counter-narratives in the stories told and more broadly the tensions and conflicts of the period.

Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London, had been in post for less than three years when, in late 2002, he decided to commit London to a bid to host the 2012 Olympics. From the Mayor's perspective the Games had to be in east London in order to bring regeneration and investment to this deprived part of the city. As a consequence, a regeneration narrative was built into the development of the Olympic bid from the outset. The bid was led by the Mayor's Office and supported by the planning and policy teams of the GLA, but importantly the bid drew on the resources and powers of the LDA. The LDA became the principal delivery vehicle for the Games bid, working under the direction of the Mayor. After the bid was won, the ODA was established and charged with creating the Olympic Park (creating the stage, while its sister organisation, LOCOG, would ultimately curate the Games or 'put on the show'); and the Olympic Park Legacy Corporation (OPLC) was set up in 2010 to take control of the Park after the Games and deliver the long term legacy of the Games through the afterlife of the Park. Up until the creation of the ODA and the OPLC, the LDA was the available organisation with the powers, resources, and capacity to work on behalf of the Mayor to drive forward the Olympic bid, to assemble the site for the Olympic Park, and to craft the early work to build arrangements to secure urban regeneration of the whole Valley and a 'legacy' for London. Latterly, the dedicated organisations of the ODA and the OPLC would take over these responsibilities.

The Mayor of London led the London Olympic bid through his Mayoral Advisor Team, supported by senior directors from the GLA and an Executive Director in the LDA, who led the land and property development dimensions. At the same time, a bid company called London 2012, and sometimes referred to as BidCo within government, was created; largely staffed by secondees from the private sector, though it was effectively a public sector body because it was funded by the LDA and central government. Other directorates in the LDA were responsible for regeneration, skills and business development and strategy, but they did not play leading roles in the Olympic bid. As the bid developed, it would naturally embrace all these wider areas of concern, as well as consuming an increasing proportion of the LDA's overall spending and this was the source of some internal tensions within the development agency.

The LDA commissioned an initial masterplan, produced between summer and Christmas 2003, partly to get an interim bid submission collated ready for the January 2004 submission but also to sow the seeds of the planning application that would be submitted in September 2004. A masterplanning and landscape consultancy team, led by EDAW, were selected as masterplanners. The winning EDAW team included a sub consultancy team called Fluid whose skills and expertise in community engagement, in speaking to local people and getting their views on board, would become an important dimension to the development of the Olympic bid. EDAW's masterplans showed how the Valley could be redeveloped and regenerated with or without the Olympic Games, but importantly promoted the concept that the Games would accelerate the delivery of the regeneration of the Valley as a core rationale for the London bid.

The Mayor's commitment to the Games sought to bind central government into committing spending to improve infrastructure in Stratford, irrespective of whether the bid was successful or not. Improving the transport connections in the east was a high priority. The Olympic bid could provide funds to extend the gains already made by bringing CTRL and the Jubilee Line to Stratford. There was a nine-year period between the Transport and Works Act to approve the CTRL project, in 1996, through to the application to grant planning consent to the proposed Stratford City scheme, and the 2 approvals for the Stratford City scheme and the Olympic Park ran side by

side in time, each securing permissions in 2005. By that time, and under the terms of the original transport scheme, the station on the CTRL route was constructed at Stratford, though there was no obligation to actually stop trains there. The scheme offered the potential to stop trains at Stratford if and when the scale of development made it commercially viable to do so. Now, the Mayor could argue that further improvements to the network, such as the extension of the East London Line through Hackney, were essential to the case that London could successfully host the Olympics.

The work to develop a regeneration story around the Olympic bid drew upon longer standing work to promote a regeneration strategy for the Lower Lea. The LDA had developed a so-called 'Matrix Group' for the Lower Lea and this had drawn together representatives from the boroughs and other local partners in a collaborative exercise to develop a strategy for the area and to establish investment priorities. It was an early attempt to link local and regional priorities and to tell a single story for the regeneration of the Lea Valley. The Olympic bid changed the pace and the focus of the work. The Matrix Group was wound up and its work was subsumed into the work programme towards the development of the Olympic bid led by EDAW. A Masterplan Reference Group was created, involving the boroughs in the unfolding work, now placed firmly in the context of the Olympic bid.

7.2 Narrative constructions of the Lower Lea as a place 2002-2007

A shift in authorship of the place narrative

While Newham Council's work to promote the Arc of Opportunity had attracted considerable attention in planning news and among property developers, the designation of the Lea Valley as an Opportunity Area, marked the success of the local borough campaign to 'put the area on the map'. 2002 marked the starting point of the practical influence of the London Plan, albeit in draft, on the Lea Valley. The first London Plan was published in February 2004, though the broad shape of the draft was in place two years earlier, 18 months into the Mayor Ken Livingstone's election into office in 2000: a remarkable achievement. Now the Lea Valley was confirmed as a place that would accommodate some of London's growth in housing and the economy and early ideas about London's 'centre of gravity' moving eastwards were mooted.

While previous plans had also promoted the Valley as a place to accommodate London growth, in this period, *authorship* of that proposition shifted from the local to the regional bodies, led by the London Mayor. Some believed that the shift in perceptions of the Valley happened so quickly that memories of the condition of the Valley were erased:

Helen excerpt 1

Later on, a lot of people were really critical, and they were saying 'But what have the boroughs got?' 'Where's the true regeneration?' 'Well, what are we getting out of this really?' And I was thinking, do you not remember? Did you not stand in the Lower Lea Valley six years ago? Is your memory really so short?

Fresh eyes and sober appraisals

The perception of east London shifted overtly in this period. The GLA brought fresh eyes to assess the development prospects for the Valley, reinterpreting the place for the purposes of the London Plan. This was an opportunity to build on the momentum generated by the local councils and to challenge the early perceptions that the barriers were insurmountable. However, the sober appraisals of the scale of the challenges were still in evidence. One of the Mayoral Advisors indicated that they didn't know [in that early period] how to unlock its potential.

Helen excerpt 2

I remember going on a barge, around 2002, before the Olympic Bid, going up the canals. There were tyres, fridges and the rest. The Mayor's Office did recognise the Lower Lea was a priority before the Olympic bid, but I also think it was dawning on us that it was also going to take a hell of a lot to unlock it.

The re-imagining of the Lea Valley as a London place, the site of a London project with an international profile, put pressure on institutions to develop an understanding of the place and to articulate a vision for its change. The proposal to bid for the Olympics meant that the UK's most senior politicians began to visit and become associated with the area, buying into the emerging story of the place.

Thinking about what we achieved takes me back to the times when the waterway system was still derelict. We did a lot of work to explain the problems to politicians and government officials, to demonstrate the potential of the area and explain the role the waterways could play. We used to take government officials with us. I remember one time when we took Deputy Prime Minister Prescott out on a boat; I can always remember the moment. I can see him he's on this fast rib and one of the guys on the bank said, 'Shout if you want to go faster John' and he said, 'Bugger off!' When we were on the boat on a fast rib and he got it, he got it, Prescott got it. We were having a real laugh we were going on the Limehouse Cut and one of these East End young lads, said to his friends 'Hey, that's Tony Prescott!' John Prescott turned to us and said, 'I get that all the bloody time!'

An opportunity for London

Later in 2002, soon after the designation of the Lea Valley as an Opportunity Area, Mayor Ken Livingstone committed to the London bid to host the Olympic Games on the condition that they would take place in east London. To date, the Mayor's development agency, the LDA, had only intervened to a limited extend in land purchases in Stratford and the Lower Lea. The commitment to the Olympic bid transformed the LDA's land and property focus, concentrating its resources and attention on land assembly to speculate acquisitions and the assembly of options on land to support the Olympic bid. This was the dramatic practical consequence of the elevation of the significance of the Lea Valley in London policy terms.

Helen excerpt 3

The Mayor had to take the considered view of things, and he didn't take his time about it, you know, within 18 months we had really worked out which way was up. Within 18 months we had grasped the concept that the Lower Lea Valley was an important priority. The problem was, without the Olympics: How would we have tackled it? Where would we have got the investment? That's why Ken said, 'it [the Olympics] has got to be there'. That's where we needed to spend the money, and there is no other way in a million years we would have got the money out of Government to address the scale of the problems that needed to be addressed.

In the hands of the GLA, the role of the Lower Lea was confirmed as a place with opportunity for investment, a place that imaginatively, could be conceived as the

future location for an expanding central London. The Plans constructed this story in an ideological sense: a story consciously constructed and told. However, there was also a shift in mentality: a more sub-conscious acceptance of the changed perception. The Olympics brought the establishment to east London and made its backwaters familiar territory. This was a time in which central London shifted eastwards and the Lea Valley was the fulcrum for the conversion.

Boundaries redefined

In 2003, the masterplanners had floated a thought experiment that the boundaries for the Olympic Park could be pushed out across areas like Fish Island. Their propositions were informed by their wider engagement with the Lea Valley regeneration perspective. Their client, the LDA, instructed the urban designers to draw a much tighter boundary, so as to concentrate on the land acquisition issues and to provide evidence for the CPO enquiries. EDAW removed about a third of the masterplan area, pulling in the land ownership boundary for the Olympics, but as a consequence also pulling in the planning and design boundary. Later, after the ODA was appointed, the boundary came in even further because, from a psychogeography point of view, the Blue Fence went up around the site for the Olympic Park and that became the focus. Since that time, the OPLC/LLDC's pursuit of programmes in the fringe areas represented, intellectually, attempts to reverse the impact of the thinking the earlier initiatives had generated.

What would have happened if, psychologically, the Park gates had been placed a long way outside of the green space among the existing residential areas? The consequence would have been to push further out the management regime and the entry, so a visitor would have entered the Park gates and 'park-land', but you might be another half a mile from the green space. More people would have been living in the designated Park. The definition of the geographic boundaries in a different way would have consequences for the strategy of integration. The consequence of the designation of a tight boundary around what would become the Olympic Park was to create a group of neighbouring communities that were of another place right from the outset.

George excerpt 1

I remember the discussions at the time, we did all that work, I remember we did that piece of work on how many canal bridges do you need, let's say on the western boundary. At a socio-economic level you would have immediately pulled more people in. You might have had a problem in the sense that you would have had a bigger constituency that you had to deal with, but at heart I feel you should engage with communities, that's what it's all about. So, it think if the boundary was wider, you could have created a stronger constituency that valued everything that was going on. You'd have immediately have given the local authorities a stronger seat. These may be all good reasons why people didn't want to do it.'

Design thinking

2002-2007 is the defining period when the narrative themes, outlined in Appendix 2 below, took shape. Some of the conceptual groundwork of the Arc of Opportunity and the Leaside Framework was carried forward into new plans produced by EDAW for the GLA. The GLA's Architecture and Urbanism Unit, later to be rebranded 'Design for London', worked closely with masterplanners EDAW and, in turn, the urban designers collaborated with the GLA's planners, who were developing the GLA's planning framework the Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2007). The design concepts such as 'water city' and 'tear in the fabric', became defining ways of understanding the Valley, and some of individuals who helped formulate them would carry them forward and reassert them in future contexts. The entanglement of the themes in this period is discussed in 7.4 below.

7.3 Narrative constructions of agency and authorship 2002-2007

The GLA's work on the Olympic bid and the Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) might be understood as the mark of the success of the boroughs in elevating the importance of the Lea Valley, now recognised as a strategic location of London significance. The passing of authorship from local to regional scale represented a significant watering down of local control of the agenda: the GLA's arrival as a centralised institution threatened to make the success-winning regional support a pyrrhic victory. However, the GLA was clear it was seeking to build on, not dilute, the existing work programmes:

> Helen excerpt 4
>
> The Arc of Opportunity stuff wasn't bad. It wasn't wrong. Nobody thought, oh that's rubbish, we have to start again. I know we ended up going slightly somewhere else, but you can't get to where you need to be, without going through some iteration. The Arc of Opportunity stuff was really quite good.

The Mayor's intervention, based on the rationale that bidding for the Games would leverage government investment for east London, was decisive. Livingstone put his most senior advisors and a number of trusted executive officers to work on the London Olympic bid:

> Helen excerpt 5
>
> We commissioned ARUP to see if it was feasible and worth it to bid for the Olympics. Ken had said we would only do a bid for the Olympics if it were actually regeneration. In 2003, a group of us went to see Ken with the ARUP report in our hands. The report said it would cost 2.3 billion and break even. We all stood outside beforehand and discussed it: 'What do you think?'; 'I think it looks alright'; 'I think we should bid'; 'We've got to do it haven't we?'; 'We've got to do it'. We went in and Ken said, 'Right we're bidding!' There was little discussion in that we weren't weighing up the pros and cons. Obviously, Ken had read the report: he was a detail guy, he had read it and said, 'That's it, we're bidding!'.

The LDA's 'Matrix Group' of local stakeholders, had already initiated a programme of work to combine the studies of the Arc of Opportunity in Newham, and Leaside in Tower Hamlets, and to produce a regeneration strategy for an area, called the Leaside Arc. The idea was that the work would generate priorities for the LDA's regeneration investment, within the LDA regeneration directorate. The problem with this approach was that the LDA's Land and Property Team made their own decisions about investment in land assembly and development. Despite the rhetoric of joined up working, the LDA, an organisation in its infancy, had not overcome all the teething problems given by the way it was formed, namely by bolting together teams from former separate bodies (Business Link, EP, GOL and Learning and Skills Council). The Matrix Group could not call on the authority of most of the executive of the LDA, so in the words of one informant, its work was perceived in the LDA/GLA as 'hobbyist', to the frustration of the many local organisations who invested time and resources to its work programme.

Matthew excerpt 1

I know there was Water City and all of these concepts and I think there was probably an external perception that there was lots of hobbyist stuff going on, lots of intervention in local areas because it was interesting, and it was intellectually challenging. So, there's lots of stuff happening, but it was happening at that pace that intellectual curiosity allowed. Whereas the Olympics, if it did one thing, as these things often do, it just catalysed all of the existing work and existing structures, and kind of lifted it up and through it all up in the air and it all landed back down but suddenly there was this locus that allowed everything to land in a place where it started to make sense in a big scale for the first time.

The decision to make a bid to host the 2012 Games shifted firmly authorship of the strategy for regeneration, as well as development, to within the remit of the Olympic arrangements and the Matrix Group was quickly wound up. Executive Director Tony Winterbottom was the lead officer in the LDA for the Olympic bid, so he de facto took control of the wider regeneration agenda, though over time discrete arrangements will later be established for socio-economic regeneration (Evans, 2016). Public pronouncements about the regeneration impact of the Games proliferated though, within the LDA, the work to substantiate those claims was variously without status, sparsely developed or non-existent in an organisation that was struggling to 'norm and form'.

The decision to bid put massive strain on the LDA, and also resulted in the creation of new vehicles to deliver the bid:

Matthew excerpt 2

It's probably fair to say that in early 2003, the LDA had only really existed for two and a half years and it was still a relatively dysfunctional body in that it had been created by lots of bits bolted on together and it had never had time as an organisation to form and norm, and do all of the evolutionary organisational development stuff; it just had a massive programme. Projects were there, there was government money to be spent and, in this sense, the LDA was very much like all of the other development authorities at the time. It also carried a lot of baggage from its predecessor organisations.

Mayor Ken Livingstone established a dedicated company, BidCo, with a board of private sector partners, to lead the bidding process. Meanwhile, the public sector, mostly using the resources of the LDA, commissioned work to build the case and drove forward the work to assemble the site.

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Matthew excerpt 3

The Bid Company had a multi headed governance with central government and the Mayor overseeing it, trying to behave independently and not being constrained by its owners. Add to that all the layers of public sector bodies around the edges, you had a complete cocktail of confusion in terms of governance of who was doing what and who was in charge. There was a culture of mistrust of the public sector among some who had been recruited from the commercial world. This needed to be overcome given the overriding need for the public sector to deliver most aspects of the Bid. When the Bid Company eventually recruited its Chief Executive Keith Mills, from a background with Air Miles, which he'd set up, he brought a fairly measured approach and a gravitas to the organisation.

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The GLA/LDA authorship of the spatial vision for the Lea Valley was vested in masterplanners, who developed a vision for the Lea Valley, with or without the Games. The product of the LDA's work programme on the Lea Valley, via the Matrix Group, was absorbed into the EDAW team's masterplanning work. The masterplan included three options: the Lea Valley with no Olympics (a bid and lose scenario); the Lea Valley with the Olympic Park in it (a bid and win scenario up to Games time) and the Lower Lea after the Games was over, and the Park was refashioned for legacy (a bid and win scenario beyond Games time). Their work became the evidence base for the GLA's OAPF, which was finally published in 2007, reflecting the successful collaboration between the GLA planners responsible for the OAPF, and the EDAW masterplanning team. The GLA's urban design team and LDA regeneration officers worked behind the scenes to support this process. A small group of individuals developed a shared work programme with a shared language and conceptual framework.

The masterplanning process built institutional coherence as well as a spatial vision. In turn, coherence was given by the Mayor's personal involvement and the exercise of his authority through his Mayoral advisor in determining the delivery arrangements

and appointing all the key players. EDAW's chief Urban Designer interpreted the concept of the Olympic bid and 'spoke in a language the boroughs understand' about the opportunities and impact of the Games measured against local political priorities. This arrangement introduced coherence to the emerging London-led story for the Lower Lea, inspiring confidence among senior local politicians and officers, critically contributing to the success of the entire project. The EDAW masterplanners were accountable to the Mayor via his Mayoral Advisor, so the power of authorship was not simply a matter of personality and charisma, though they were crucial:

Matthew excerpt 4

There was a regular forum where all of the boroughs would meet on a Thursday, normally at 07:30 at some God forsaken place it would be, and they would get updates on things and EDAW would come along and present their findings, and Jason [Prior, of EDAW] would do this, I remember him doing it at Mulberry House down at Tower Hamlets 7:30 in the morning, I remember him doing it over at City Airport and various other places. And that would be a mixture of politicians and executives getting briefed on things because to be honest that was the only way that the boroughs were really able to engage with the process. The process was motoring on and, given the juggernaut that local government is, it wasn't able to be nimble and responsive and stay with that pace. That was their only real touch point.

An early version of the 'script' for the Olympic bid was announced at the event at Three Mills in 2003. Local leaders stood up at this event and endorsed the scheme, echoing the strategy and reflecting the comfort that had developed around the strategy in the briefing meetings between the GLA and the boroughs:

Matthew

Symbolically a lot of the regeneration leads from the boroughs and local agencies stood up and said, 'we back this', you know, from Greenwich or locally from Tower Hamlets or whatever, and that was the first time I had seen them publicly say: we kind of get this and we are supporting you all the way. So, they were on the record at that point.

The overt message from the event was that local boroughs publicly endorsed the London bid; the frame of mind, or more unconscious message, was that senior officials were engaging in and becoming familiar with the idiosyncrasies of the local

place. I remember one director who told the audience on that day that it was possible to cycle from Tower Bridge to Three Mills without joining the road. He told the story as if it was news to his audience, but actually his telling the story reflected the fact that he had himself learned something new. A parallel process took place to secure a common agenda between regional and central government. The Deputy Prime Minister's support for the Olympic bid was assured when the project was presented as the next chapter in the unfolding story of the impact of the CTRL on Stratford's regeneration. A common outlook was emerging; one that rationalised the stakeholder interests in the Lea Valley and the Olympics.

> **Matthew**
>
> The stakeholder map was, you know, complicated, it was spaghetti, it was really challenging.

Power shifted dramatically in this period. While the London Mayor's power grew progressively and became enhanced through his decision to promote and ultimately deliver the Games, the fast pace of change meant that the LDA became a significant, indeed critical, factor in assembling the site for the Olympic Games. In parallel, new agencies were created to take forward the Olympic project. A number of senior managers, people who played crucial roles in creating conditions for the Games, were replaced by new appointees, including some senior and experienced global players who were perceived to be capable of leading the delivery of a mega project for London.

The London Mayor put his authority behind the bid for the Games, in full knowledge that it would lever national government investment into transport infrastructure, land remediation and the development of new facilities in east London, as well as establishing a development market. The Mayor and his officers rewrote the meta-themes of London Growth and East London Deprivation, establishing the Olympics as the narrative theme that defined how these two meta-themes intertwine. He did so in a compelling way that bound national government into the story, committing the Treasury in the process.

The rapprochement between Ken Livingstone and Tony Blair, and the role that Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott played in bringing central government support, were critical to the success of the project. The moment when Livingstone and Blair stood on the stage in the Royal Opera House and declared their joint backing for the London bid signalled the new institutional context that had been formed; one in which the authority of the new Mayor, a person who in the past was mistrusted, was given national blessing.

Despite the resolution of stakeholder relationships at the most senior levels, the process remained extremely complicated and required ongoing attention to, and management of, relationships among multiple partners. The relationship between London government and the boroughs found its first major test around the need to deliver confidence in the planning system. The strategy was to deliver a planning consent for the Olympic Park and thereby dispel international myths around London's complicated planning system and the UK's inability to get its act together in terms of delivering major infrastructure investment schemes. The Mayor of London at that time had call-in rights, in other words the power to veto a major scheme, but the power to approve lay with the local boroughs, as planning authorities. So, a must win for the bid was to get a consent. The bid decision was to be made in July 2005, preceded by an IOC visit to London in February 2005, following a bid submission in autumn 2004. If the Olympic bid text was to assert that the proposed scheme had planning consent, the planning application would need to be determined by 2004.

The masterplanning work for the Olympic Park also ran in parallel with the longer standing work programme of the development consortium for Stratford City, which was also nearing the point of submitting a planning application for the huge scheme for a regional shopping mall, commercial offices and residential development. Moreover, the Olympic proposals interfered with the plans for the Stratford City scheme. The proposed shopping centre would, it was anticipated, form the gateway into the Olympic Park and the Stratford City's proposed commercial office development, known as the International Quarter would become the entry point; but the most serious overlap between the schemes was given by the Olympic masterplan's requirement for the major housing site within the Stratford City to be used temporarily as the site for the Athlete's Village:

Matthew excerpt 5

There was an overlap in the areas they were going to put into their planned schemes. And the two were in a race to the line: it was like Wacky Races because they were both in a race to get their planning consent in first. There was a lot of overlap in terms of the schemes and they both got a consent, Stratford had to get their consent from Newham Council, but Newham was also a party to the three borough arrangements created to afford consent for the Olympics scheme. There was a lot of commercial capital tied up in the Stratford scheme and potentially the Olympics could have completely derailed them, so you could understand their nervousness. So, throw that into the mix and it's just another organisational complication.

The joint planning meeting took place and, despite some difficulties on the night, the EDAW Plan was granted a planning consent. That plan would be adapted a number of times in the ensuing years between the approval of the bid in 2005 and the delivery of the Games in 2012, but the EDAW plan provided the founding document for the further development of planning policies for the area and for revised schemes that were subsequently submitted for approval by the ODA.

7.4 The play of counter-narratives in the stories of the Lea Valley 2002-2007

The official narrative for the Lower Lea Valley was constructed between 2002 and 2007 in the hot houses of the GLA, LDA and EDAW. The process culminated in a winning UK Olympic bid; one enshrined in a bid document followed by a spatial plan that present the development of the Olympic Park as an integral part of the Mayor's plan for east London. The London proposals for the Lea Valley might be understood as a counter-narrative to the locally developed regeneration strategies, though both the EDAW principal architect and a Mayoral Advisor noted that the GLA plans built on rather than reversed the work that had preceded it.

The inversion in authorship from the local to the central did not result in a different story being told; a Mayoral Advisor tells us 'The Arc wasn't a bad piece of work'. The Leaside Arc, a step along the journey, was an attempt to build on the same story but extend the geographical boundary; the Lea Valley framework plans for the Olympics and the London Plan OAPF could be understood as advanced iterations of

the same strategic principles. The process was an iterative one rather than a clash of thinking, though there were profound disagreements along the way about whether the values developed by local partners were ever fully understood and adopted by the regional leadership.

Many principles or themes were contested and recalibrated in the processes that culminated in the publication of the OAPF. The contestation to resolve differences might be read as the play of counter-narratives. The urban designers in the GLA's Architecture and Urbanism Unit were particularly keen to secure the retention of industry in the Lea Valley, and this contributed to a planning designation of many parts of the Lower Lea as Strategic Industrial Land. The urban designers drew on European examples to demonstrate how industrial land uses could be effectively integrated within the city in the context of densification (LDA & GLA, 2006). At the same time, the GLA planners were seeking policies to strengthen the Mayor's hand in insisting that development would increase the supply of 'affordable housing' (Bowie, 2010). The Water City vision, first developed by Richard Rogers and Andrew Mawson, implied a specific focus on the riverine qualities of the Valley; Jason Prior and EDAW would develop a vision for the Park based on an English pastoral interpretation of the Valley's riverine wild space. All these strategic priorities jostled for position. While the planning process insisted on evidence-based policies, it is clear from the data that compelling narratives and powerful rhetoric reinforced the arguments behind the claims being made.

The Olympic bid proposals were entangled with the longer running themes of reorienting investment from the overheated west to the east of London and securing public funds for infrastructure development in the deprived east rather than the affluent west was a counter-narrative born of Ken Livingstone's political commitments. There was a considerable sporting lobby for a bid based on Wembley Stadium, and the Mayor's LDA was implicated in this because it had already invested in the Stadium redevelopment, as part of the LDA's investment in the regeneration of Park Royal and Wembley.

Behind this political orientation towards bringing investment and sporting assets to deprived east, rather than affluent west, London laid a more profound opposition. The

property development and investment market had for decades pushed business development along the Thames Valley corridor. Berkshire, for example, is the highest performing region in the UK after London, with strengths in sectors such as ICT (Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, 2016). Livingstone's policies sought to use government intervention to swing investment round to the Thames Gateway corridor in the east. The Olympic bid would seek to make Stratford's development a catalytic move in that strategy, irrespective of the IOC's decision on the site of the 2012 Games.

The London Mayor, encouraged by voices including sports advocate Richard Sumray and architect Richard Rogers (Rogers & Brown, 2017), decided he would back the bid insofar as it could be used to secure government investment in east London. Although the Mayor's commitment was predicated on his commitment to a regeneration narrative, this was little understood at first among the people from the private sector who recruited to promote the bid. The antipathy between public and private sector cultures, expressed by the scepticism of some in BidCo towards their public sector sponsors, had to be overcome. There was a fast learning curve:

Matthew excerpt 6

The London Bid Company started to form in summer to late 2003 eventually after a couple months it suddenly dawned on them that, blimey, this regeneration lark and all of these public sector kinds of weirdoes that they have, they just naturally didn't want to deal with or engage with, they were actually on to something. And I think there was a nirvana moment, particularly through the communications people, they suddenly realised the power of the regeneration message.

The commitment to bid for the Games grew around a growing number of compelling government narratives, such as the Deputy Prime Minister's personal commitment to the CTRL. One critical moment was the meeting when Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott was presented with the masterplan, and emerging ideas. That was a time when Prescott realised that the Olympic proposals built on the CTRL Rail Link through Stratford: an initiative in which he had played a major role. It helped to secure Prescott's support, just before the time when tensions erupted within government about who would pay for what on the Olympic budget. Politically, Prescott helped promote political awareness of what was possible here, and how this actually could be a really good story.

However, government commitment to the bid was by no means unanimous. The Government generally and the Treasury specifically were extremely concerned about committing to an Olympic bid, not least because bid submission amounted to an empty cheque commitment to delivering the Park, Stadia and Games: those guarantees were written into the Candidature files (BOA, 2004).

An over-riding issue needed to be resolved to secure government backing for the bid: the real cost of the Games. Competing narratives ran through this period. Confusions about whether costs should be attributed to the Games or elsewhere were allowed to run. For example, the LDA secured consent from the Treasury to spend money on land assembly, on the basis that land assembled would be used to support economic development and regeneration with or without the Games.

The Treasury Green Book appraisal was written and approved around May 2003, making the business case for a budget of £743 million pounds for the LDA to assemble the land necessary for the Games and secure regeneration benefits in terms of jobs, homes, brown field sites regenerated and social impact in terms of communities. That business case gave the LDA permission to use existing funds, plus top-sliced funds from its other programmes, to create a pot of money for assembling land. By the autumn of 2003, the LDA was making its first purchases of land for the Olympics.

The first site the LDA bought was at Carpenters Road, the original site for the Aquatics Centre. The LDA argued it would build and open a swimming pool in the middle of the Lower Lea Valley with or without the Olympics. If the Olympic bid hadn't been won, there would have been a 50-metre pool in the middle of an industrial

estate. It was shown on the master plan to demonstrate to the IOC that the UK could assemble the land and was already making commitments to fund the development of facilities

The dominant narrative aired in privacy of government was that the best option was to bid and lose. The idea that process would culminate in a losing bid was widely held inside the GLA, and this was not an unwelcome scenario, insofar as the Government commitments to infrastructure investment had been secured and a widely supported strategy for the regeneration of the Lea Valley was articulated:

> **Helen**
> The OAPF was always, I think, seen as a piece of work to deal with the situation when we lost the bid. Do you remember we had to have Plan A (win) and Plan B (lose) in the plans for the Lower Lea? So, we needed the OAPF.

The Games was the counter-narrative that won and reflected the persuasive influence within government of Tessa Jowell (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport), John Prescott and a few others. At the most senior political level, all the work to rebuild relationships between Mayor Ken Livingstone and Prime Minister's Tony Blair government culminated in Livingstone and Blair sharing a stage at the Royal Opera House to announce the UK Olympic bid.

Matthew excerpt 8

Ken Livingstone and Tony Blair presented that event, launched it, bit of fanfare, and the first submission was in. So, at that stage, you know, the cat was out of the bag, London was in it. And fairly early on, the strategy was accepted that one of the big criticisms of the UK generally has for major infrastructure or any big project like this was the planning system was perceived as a problem. I think government realised actually they needed him [Ken Livingstone] on this. My take away on the day was that the two outstanding speakers were Tony Blair and Ken Livingstone. They were in complete unison in what they were saying but they were head and shoulders above everyone else from the Olympic family, they were without notes speaking from the heart and hugely impressive about why an Olympic bid is going to be fantastic for this part of London, and London and the UK.

Writing the bid required the production of a compelling story; the LDA was championing one great big 'marketing initiative'. The London story for the Games was predicated on demonstrating that the development helped drive the Mayor's city strategy (Brown, Cox & Owens, 2012) and that it would deliver a regeneration legacy. The LDA's ability to combine a regeneration and development story was a troubled one; the Regeneration Division and the Land and Property Team within the LDA were historically separate bodies that had been combined within a single organisation. They brought different cultures, priorities and ways of seeing the world together, but their outlooks were not easy to resolve. The bid story suggested a harmonious synergy was possible. A 'socio-economic language' was necessary to win, a language unfamiliar to the Land and Property Division of the LDA (the lead commissioners for the work on the bid), but 'the social agenda was never given the same priority'. Socio-economic regeneration appeared, at the level of institutional culture, as a counter-narrative to land and property development. This was a period of major institutional change: new individuals were drafted in and ultimately new bodies formed to wipe the slate clean; some individuals adapted while others were replaced. In this time of ferment and change, with the associated cultural shifts that took place, compelling stories became the means for some of the longer standing actors to hang onto institutional and strategic memories and to adapt them in new circumstances.

The EDAW masterplanning team played a crucial role in managing the tension between the competing narratives of Olympic bidding and socio-economic regeneration:

Matthew excerpt 9

Jason Prior and the EDAW team had real skill in that whenever they presented to Boroughs or anyone else they presented in regeneration language, starting from the basis of what the socio-economic footprint was of the area and the historical challenges. They did it in a way that people understood and built up the story. They never started from the perspective of, the Olympics is coming, this is what it will mean. Instead, they started from a socio-economic impact perspective and then turned that into a spatial interpretation. I think the cuteness and the way it was presented, made for a very welcoming and engaging dialogue. Jason delivered a very acceptable way of getting really difficult messages through to lots of the local politicians and their executives.

An EDAW masterplanner reflected on the unresolved tension in the competing narratives of physical and socio-economic regeneration that would spill into the post 2007 period:

George excerpt 2

The social agenda was never given the same priority as the physical improvements in the development of the Olympic bid submission. If you look at the determination that might have went on around social integration, no one suggested that we uprate the team working on that agenda or said we will need to stick a couple of million in there to make that team more fit for purpose. It never kind of makes it to the top of the table, it's a contextual idea that makes it a good thing to go and do for an Olympics, but never enough attention is paid for it, or to it, during the rush to get the bloody thing put on.

This shared sentiment that London's bid would lose was the backcloth to the chaotic and scenes in Trafalgar Square, Stratford and the offices of the LDA, GLA and the Government, when profound shock overcame disbelief and jubilation disguised trepidation, as the announcement reached the capital live from Singapore in the London morning of July 6th, 2005. On that day, an LDA officer phoned the team who were writing the contract to underground the power lines to say 'keep writing' because they were about to put their pens down. In the event that the Olympics had not been awarded they would have said, 'forget it, that's it, job's done', because no one was going to do that job without the Olympics.

Helen excerpt 6

The Treasury thought they were going to get a heroic defeat; instead they had a victory and had to work out how the promises that had been made in the bid submission would actually be met!

Graham excerpt 1

Prescott had agreed to fund the undergrounding of the power lines using the Thames Gateway budget. There was chaos in government about how it would all be funded. No one could agree. Prescott did some sort of deal I think with Gordon Brown.

Planning counter-narratives: from 'bottom up' to 'top down' governance

The London Mayor's tactic of mounting a bid as a means to secure national government commitment to investment in London's infrastructure certainly paid off. The Olympic Games accelerated the Lower Lea's development, hastened investment in land remediation, development of rail links and brought forward parkland and leisure amenities for a deprived part of London. These gains were achieved through a 'top-down' planning process involving centralised control of land assembly, masterplanning led by national and regional government with the involvement but not control of local authorities and the successful development of the Olympic Park in time and on budget.

This approach, on the face of it, ran counter to the growing commitment to collaborative planning, and community engagement in regeneration that had become increasingly popular in the years running up to the creation of the LDA and the decision to bid for the Games. Planning for the Olympic Park appeared to sweep aside 'bottom-up' planning and regeneration processes, in an approach that mimicked the style of the development corporations of the 1980s. The London Olympics certainly disrupted and recast the pre-existing institutional fabric for planning and regeneration in the area. However, the approach did not mark a wholesale departure from the commitment to engaging stakeholders in the process. The commitment to legacy and the creation of the LLDC was accompanied by what would popularly be seen as an enlightened liberal approach that sought opportunities to mobilise involvement and to engage with communities at every stage.

One of the key ways the commitment to popular engagement was secured was by a broadening of scope. While the development of the Olympic Park itself appeared to recede from the public gaze, quite literally disappearing behind a blue fence erected to establish site security and control of the land, the legacy project was extended from regeneration to sports participation, health, volunteering, employment, arts and culture. This widened scope enabled an incremental programme to unfold locally, London wide and nationally. The programme culminated in the Cultural Olympiad programme that preceded the Games themselves, and the procession of the Olympic Torch around the UK. The latter programme was a remarkable populist success. The route was designed so that every part of the UK could be within one hour of the

procession, and over eight thousand people from all walks of life carried the torch for short stretches. Despite a crescendo of media anxiety about wasted spending, security concerns and other negative stories, the UK Olympics appeared to have secured a considerable measure of popular support.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS 2007 - 2012

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description and an analysis of the evolution of planning and regeneration policies and practice in the study area between 2007 and 2012. Overall, the chapter tells the story of the development of the Olympic Park and the pressures on government as it faced up to the realities of the commitments made to host the Games in 2012. The introduction sets the scene. Section 8.2 is an account of the narrative constructions of 'place' in this period. Section 8.3 explores authorship and agency and considers who were the people making things happen and how they, and my respondents, framed their ability to act within the institutional context of the period. Section 8.4 probes the play of counter-narratives in the stories told and more broadly the tensions and conflicts of the period.

The success of the Olympic bid meant that those commitments and guarantees written into the bid submission, which had been backed by the Government, had all to be delivered. The LDA created a 'shadow' ODA inside the LDA, pending the creation of the ODA itself as the agency that would be charged with developing the Olympic Park, known locally as 'setting the stage' for the Games. A number of external appointments were made to augment London's delivery capacity, bringing some of the UK's most experienced and skilled professionals to the process.

8.2 Narrative constructions of the Lower Lea as a place 2007-2012

The IOC decision to award the Games to London on July 6th, 2005 shifted the story of the Lea Valley's development decisively. From this day on, it became certain that existing uses in the land designated as the Park would be cleared. The site would be returned as a transformed 'piece of the city' after 2012. The story of the Lea Valley would be written in soil and concrete as well as in words and images.

For five years between 2007 and 2012, the Olympic Park became a construction site, hidden behind a security fence covered by wooden boards that were painted blue. The fence, served as a synecdoche for the entire panoply for the security arrangements

around the construction site and the removal of public access just at a time when the Games marketing strategy was to emphasise public inclusion. The Blue Fence, as it was popularly known, symbolised the new bounded character of this part of the Lower Lea. While the stage for the Games was hidden, the stories of its future proliferated. Experimental themes developed in the earlier periods were rehearsed, adapted and adopted by an ever-widening army of professionals and agencies drafted in from around the UK, and the world, to deliver the Games. The poetic urban design ideas such as 'water city', 'the tear in the fabric' and the linked metaphor of 'stitching the fringe' came into their own in this period, informing the design of the Park for the Games and being absorbed into the plans for transformation into its legacy mode.

The ODA produced revised masterplans, taking into account revisions to proposals based on securing cost savings and operating efficiencies. The ODA masterplans also addressed the relationship between the Olympic Park and Stratford City, a huge retail, commercial and housing development for a site adjacent to the Olympic Park. The ODA combined the plans and negotiated agreements that resulted in the housing on the Stratford City site, forming the Athlete's Village for the Games and a realignment of the entrance to the Olympic Park through the retail core of the Stratford City site (Nimmo, Frost, Shaw & McNevin, 2011). The plans were further developed to address 3 scenarios: the Olympic Games scenario itself; a 'transformation' scenario, for a period immediately after the Games when facilities would be de-commissioned and the Park re-opened; and a third and evolving legacy scenario, including the phased release of sites for housing, commercial, leisure and mixed-use development.

These plans formed the basis for planning applications submitted by the ODA in 2007 for site preparation, Olympic facilities and for 'transformation', namely the works to prepare the site for legacy. A design strategy was also published in 2007 that codified principles for the future development of the site. This included principles for remediation, temporary structures, conversion of the Olympic Village into housing for legacy, establishing transport connections, infrastructure, and establishing which buildings would remain on site post-Games. The masterplans allowed for a phased approach to delivery, establishing fifteen delivery zones that could be progressed incrementally but with a common approach to staged delivery in each instance (Nimmo et al., 2011).

Lower Lea Opportunity Area Planning Framework as an implementation guide

In later years of this period, the Government invested significantly in public realm works in the neighbourhoods around the Park, and these become the short term means to enact some of the principles enshrined in the 2007 Lower Lea OAPF (GLA). However, the relationship between the OAPF and the development of proposals for the Park and the Valley wasn't necessarily clear, especially to newcomers who were singularly focused on delivering the Olympic Park as an end in itself. Kate, an urban designer who worked in the GLA's Architecture and Urbanism Unit and would go on to work in the ODA and then LLDC, posed the challenge of interpreting development proposals for the park and its infrastructure in this way:

Kate excerpt 1

I believe that the OAPF, the plan we produced after we won the Games, is the most comprehensive and clear and compelling document that exists on the Lower Lea Valley and in my mind everything that's happened since is all about delivering the OAPF. But it's funny because it's not widely talked about. All the things that were set out in the OAPF then make sense of everything that followed. I've never heard anyone else involved in it now present it like that. Most people start by saying: this is the Olympics and there was this other stuff around. I don't think this is the story at all.

The principles enshrined in the OAPF included these propositions: to create three new town centres to support the population growth at West Ham, Bromley-by-Bow and Hackney Wick; to create a linear green spine; and to rationalise the industry and configure its place within a new mix of uses including economic activities. The thematic principles developed in the earlier periods became significant in guiding the government's public realm investment in the pre-Games period, but it needed people like Kate to bring those principles to bear in the decision-making processes. The Lower Lea was potentially complex, but the ideas from the OAPF and the design thinking, interpretations of the nature of the place generated in the years 2002-2007, brought clarity and provided the framework to guide planning and investment decisions.

This strong current of thinking, a Valley-wide story, ran counter to the myopic focus on the Park itself. Using the design themes from the OAPF, it became possible to re-interpret proposals based on otherwise taken-for granted meanings by situating them within a different narrative. For example, one theme was 'places of work'. This concept paid attention to the more traditional concern with the Valley's industrial sector, but also embraced the newer employment that could be created in the town centres. The flexible concept 'places of work' invited imaginative solutions to mixing industry with other uses, or growing employment within the new centres. This was a pro-active approach to engineering the shift from old to new employment rather than a defensive strategy based on zoning some places for industry and thus preventing further loss. A similar flexibility was given by the story about green landscape. If the Park was the starting point, landscape would be conceived as the public realm setting for residential and other development, in the style of garden cities or London's Great Estates: not bad design principles. However, the wider focus on the Valley invited responses to the challenges of building a relationship between urban London and the Lea Valley Park, so that the Park was one step in a north-south green corridor linking Lea Valley to the River Thames. Kate, now an urban designer in LLDC in 2015, gave a contemporary example of her application of long-standing principles to the contemporary developments on and around the Park in legacy mode:

Heritage

Kate excerpt 2

Other themes include the approach to the waterways and heritage. For example, on heritage I've been instrumental in getting conservation areas declared in Sugar House Lane and Hackney Wick, and that only makes sense when you say to people: well you may think these buildings are worthless but actually if you zoom out there's only three places left in the Valley that actually have heritage like that. There's Trinity Buoy Wharf, Sugar House Lane and Hackney Wick and that's it. Then suddenly people can appreciate why these have value and you can only see it that way if you look at it from the perspective of the Valley as whole.

Places of Exchange

Numerous examples illustrate how narrative themes developed at the time of the OAPF impinged forcefully on development proposals. The OAPF included a potentially ambiguous concept 'Places of Exchange':

Existing centres and … new centres … [that provide] services and amenities for both new and existing communities, linking these together to become 'Places of Exchange'. This concept of 'Places of Exchange' builds on the notion of developing clusters of community facilities, where flexible space and shared facilities can be provided to meet demand and the needs of service providers (GLA, 2007).

There was a strong diagram showing the empty middle of the Valley, the former industrial sites, and then the very populated edges of the Valley. This invited a way of thinking about how schemes at different scales, from town centres and neighbourhoods right down to individual buildings and small public spaces, might create social and physical connections. In physical terms, the strategic theme spoke to the need for bridges and connections between the fringe and the centre. In social terms, 'places of exchange' spoke to opportunity to bring different sections of the communities together; for example, integrating in-movers with existing residents, young and old, neighbourhoods to the east and west of the Park.
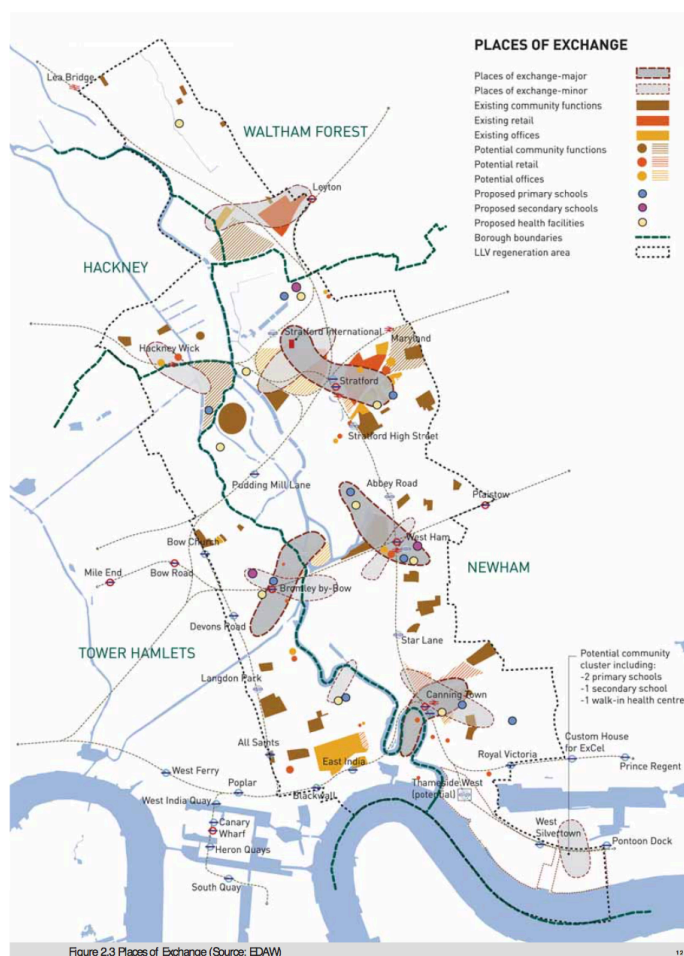
Figure 5: Places of Exchange (GLA, 2007)

An extended excerpt from Kate's story illustrates these points:

Kate excerpt 3

Our understanding of the inter-relationship between town centres, in the way we understood them, and the growth of the area was ground-breaking. It's not just a planning designation. The proposed town centres deliberately straddle or bridge that divides. So effectively what you're trying to do is make life hard for yourself by creating places of exchange, new town centres, in the hardest possible places, on the dividing lines. It would have been easier to create some brand new town centres down the middle that were their own world: very introverted. And then the existing places would carry on limping along being a bit downtrodden.

'Places of Exchange' worked as an over-arching theme, a meta-theme, for other urban design concepts that made the leap from planning policies to masterplans and to deliverable projects. Themes included: the principle of residential-led mixed development, comprehensive plans for community infrastructure of education, health and leisure services, based on detailed analysis of the scale of the new population and the deficit in provision for the existing population, a green spine, the connections between park and fringe and the porosity of the Park.

Tear in the Fabric

The 'tear in the fabric' (see Figure 6) is another meta-theme developed by the urban designers concurrent with the production of the OAPF. It speaks to the need for making reconnections inside the spaces left by the loss of industry, across the infrastructure like rail lines and water-courses that sever the Valley, between the Valley core and latterly the Olympic Park and the neighbourhoods at the fringes and achieving the north-south connection to complete the Lea Valley Regional Park.
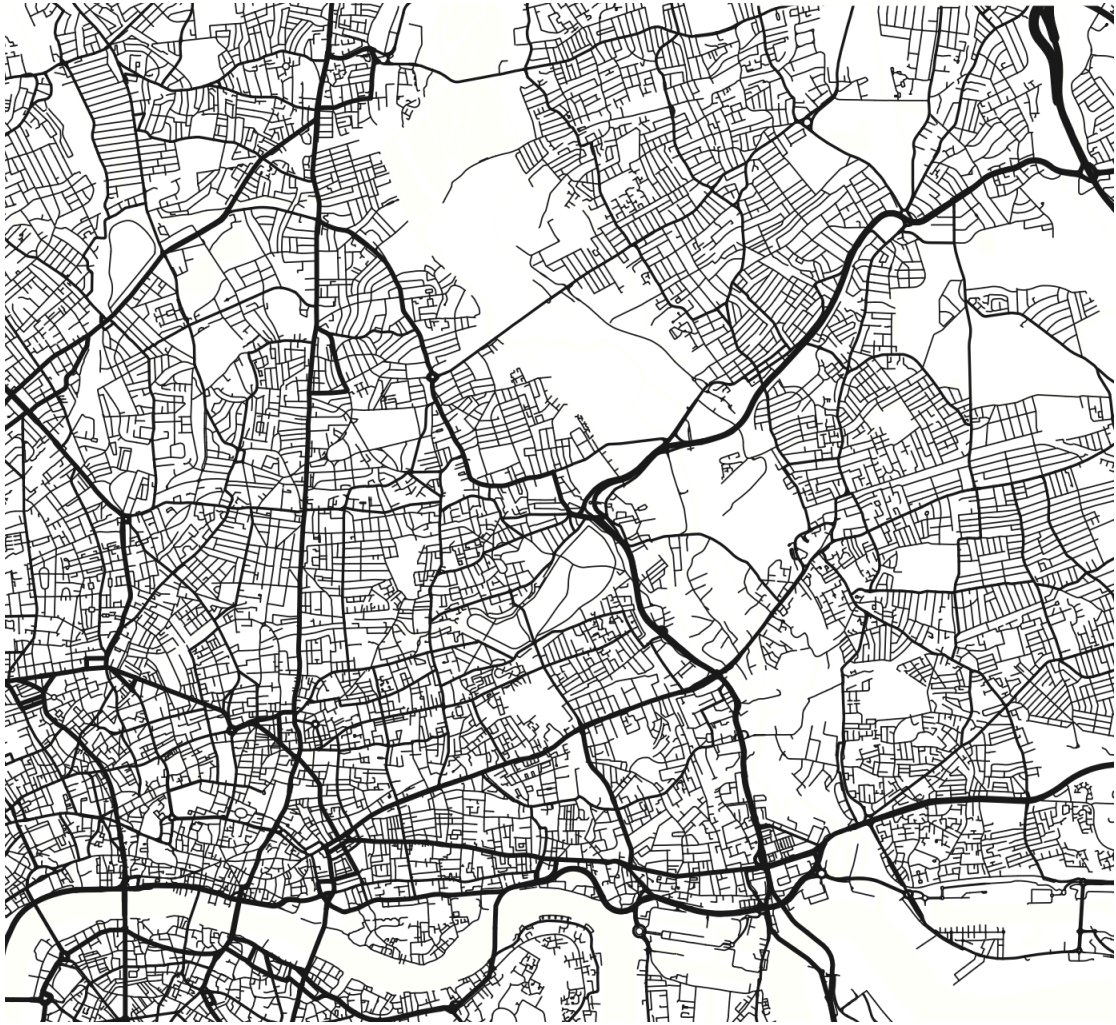
Figure 6: The Tear in the Fabric (Design for London, 2013)

Kate excerpt 4

We've done really well on the local connectivity, the pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and I think a lot of that again in my view is as a result of pushing to be so precise in the OAPF and not just, 'area of search for a new bridge', but actually, 'one here, one here, one here' and we've actually been able to get developers or different people to deliver quite a lot of those links, particularly in and around the Olympics Park, but also further south like Sugar House Lane, where we are delivering a new bus bridge over to Bromley-by-Bow.

The practicality of what could be achieved with the resources available forced a distinction between design ideas that could relatively easily be implemented and others that are placed figuratively in a 'too difficult' box.

Kate excerpt 5

The really tough thing is tackling the heavy infrastructure like the A12 and the railway line, a bloody nightmare. We weren't able to be as precise with what needed to happen with those issues in the OAPF other than 'studies needed to be done' to define the solutions. Unsurprisingly they need a lot more money and a lot more time.

Boundaries

A distinction was established by the boundary between land taken into GLA/LDA ownership and the rest. The 'Olympic Park' and the 'rest of the Lea Valley' was separated by legal ownership, different levels of investment and powers available and the imperative to clear the site within the boundary. The newly formed ODA, had to concentrate its attention and investment on the Park itself, while sustaining formally its commitment to the long term and to the wider area.

Meanwhile, the development market drove the proliferation of a number of high-rise developments along Stratford High Street with minimal attention to context and public realm. Lower down the Lea Valley, development proceeded in an ad hoc and partial way; some areas remained stagnant and ignored and thereby sustained some of the older liminal qualities of the Valley. The colonisation of Hackney Wick and Fish Island, the industrial estates outside the north western periphery of the Park, by artists and creatives accelerated. All of the available land plots there were bought by speculative developers waiting for values to rise and for permissions to be granted for redevelopment of the former industrial sites for housing: it suited them to allow temporary occupation by artists and not to look too closely at what was going on. The GLA/LDA urban designers saw an opportunity to intervene in the remarkable transformation in the economy and culture of the neighbourhood to shape the relationship between the Park and its fringe, and to achieve in the short term some of the longer term physical and cultural connections that they had imagined in their plans. It was as if 'legacy now' could be achieved years before the Games took place. This commitment, bringing cash for cultural projects but with many strings attached, was variously welcomed, received with critical and qualified engagement, and rejected and opposed by the increasingly visible, well-organised and vocal community of artists and creatives.

Stratford City, the site with an extant planning permission granted in 2005, was sub-divided into large development plots. Westfield retail centre was developed out and opened by Lend Lease in 2012, in time for the Games. A housing core was developed as the Athletes Village, on the basis that it would be converted into residential homes for rent after 2012. Further Stratford City sites were zoned for commercial development (the International Quarter) and more residential development platforms were programmed to be brought forward after the Games. Narratives for these developments started to shift from the realm of urban design and into the world of estate agents and marketing brochures, a process that would mature and accelerate after 2012.

8.3 Narrative constructions of agency and authorship 2007-2012

Battles were fought, won and lost, and in the words of another respondent: 'sometimes you just run out of road'. The LDA's land team drove the land assembly process and, remarkably, secured a cleared site that was successfully handed over to the ODA on time in 2007, so that the construction of the Olympic Park could commence. Their achievement was especially impressive given the alarm around the funding of the Games in government circles which meant their efforts were the subject of ongoing hostile scrutiny. As one respondent noted, many in the government 'wanted an honourable lose, but they got a win!'

Another narrator commented that at this time 'all these idiots from government turned up wanting to be in charge and we had to send them away'. The pressures on the individuals involved, the extent of organisational fluidity and role insecurity in this period was palpable. Some individuals who played prominent roles in the early period were casualties of the shifts in institutions and the associated play of power. A Mayoral Advisor spoke of the LDA's Land and Property Team 'doing a superb job', though the extent to which leading individuals were left unsupported by the bureaucrats around them was little appreciated.

The arrival of the Games, and the arrival of all the new people and agencies charged with delivering the Games, meant that much of the local knowledge was lost, ignored or submerged in this period. A Newham councillor tells of that moment when he and

his political colleagues decided to stop being oppositional and critical of the mis-handling, from their perspective, of the Games and the ignorance of the local context among those now in control:

Jeff excerpt 4

We said to ourselves, 'It's time to stop fighting'. From that moment on, we were unfailingly supportive and positive. We ran volunteering programmes, we ran promotional events, we created Access to Work Programmes. We knew that, in time, the Games would be over, they would go, and we would still be here, the long-term owners of the story. It's only the local communities and the agencies who, by virtue of being rooted, can hold onto the agenda in this way.

Institutions were formed, and others replaced, and institutional cultures again squared up against each other. BidCo, the agency formed to lead the bid process, attracted private sector leaders and executives, some of whom struggled to engage effectively with what, by definition, was a large scale public sector project in which effective mobilisation of all sections of local, regional and central government was a critical success factor. The ODA was perceived to have been highly efficient and successful, though it was driven by its imperative to deliver the Park and stadia on time and on budget. Some narrators bemoaned a lack of commitment to longer-term legacy values and the regeneration strategy for the whole Valley.

Costs for creating the Olympic Park continued to escalate and became the subject of intense national scrutiny. There were a series of memorandums of understanding on costs between the GLA, ODA and the Government as the budgets were reviewed. It became clear at an early stage, as the ODA was being created, that the LDA needed to let the contract to underground the power lines and to incur other costs to keep the Olympic programme on track. A sense of the intense pressures of the period, and the conflicting demands on those in leadership positions was evident:

Graham excerpt 2

We are in a very difficult process because it becomes clear that we haven't got anything like enough money. There is then a process of reviewing the bid, with DCMS and the Treasury and advice from KPMG. We don't know when we're going to get it fixed and, Gordon

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Brown, I think it to his credit and contrary to the line Ken was pushing, goes for this very big contingency which takes it to the £9.3 billion. This required a whole load of Exchequer money to be put in: £5 billion or so. That's when London government put in another £350 million. We get forced to do that and we agree to do so. Ken decides we are just going to borrow it. It's a difficult time and it takes far too long.

As soon as the bid decision was announced, the LDA took action to let contracts to underground the power lines that ran across the site and would go on to let the contracts for land remediation. At the same time the LDA had to secure the land assembly for the Olympic Park. It was conceivable that a second planning consent would be required as the plans were being altered all the time. The whole process was complicated and difficult, not least because there was a well-organised campaign-led community of businesses who were going to be displaced to make way for the Olympic Park. As well as the businesses, there were three lots of travellers, three bus garages, a church, and Clays Lane Housing Cooperative, all to relocate. The LDA bought relocation sites in Beckton for some of the businesses and managed the relocation process for some of the affected businesses. The CPO Inquiry took place around 2007, managed by the lead officer at the LDA with legal advice provided by Eversheds. There was no judicial review despite the high profile and contested nature of the process.

Graham excerpt 3

We got on site and the site was cleared by 2008. So actually to get from the bid decision in 2005 when nobody thought we would win to do a CPO, take it through Inquiry, to do all the private treaty deals and to clear the whole site, to do the bus garages, to relocate the travellers, and to get there for mid 2008, which was when the ODA needed to be on-site, was an amazing achievement by the LDA manager and his team. It took the ODA time to gear up, and they were always under time pressure. It took them a long time to settle on the final scheme. Then there were the procurements. There was the Aquatics procurement, and then the Stadium procurement was a nightmare because no one wanted to do it. The project managers were bloody good. They did do a superb job.

Procurement for the main Stadium started around 2008. The construction team got on site late 2009 and the scheme was completed in 2011, a very short timescale. An ever-expanding portion of LDA budgets were directed towards the delivery of the Games,

and it strove to hold onto the Olympic legacy agenda. Ultimately, the LDA was closed down, and a dedicated legacy vehicle, the OPLC/LLDC, was formed to inherit the legacy agenda. In the same period, the LTGDC was formed, runs its lifetime and was abolished. LTGDC had government funds and powers to promote investment in the Lea Valley outside the Olympic Park and also in Barking and Dagenham. The extensive scale of its responsibilities and its limited resources meant it was able to secure effective development in a few places, but it could never secure comprehensive change nor address intractable failures in the property market.

Despite the apparent turmoil, a few key individuals did indeed survive the changes and secured ongoing roles in the ODA and the OPLC/LLDC. At the same time, large-scale recruitment into the new bodies brought talented, experienced and effective people to bear who succeeded in delivering the Olympic Park and what was widely perceived to be a hugely successful Games that boosted London and the UK's global brand and reputation.

The understanding and appreciation of the design principles alluded to above, and a commitment to them, was sustained among a few individuals who perceived themselves to be 'keepers' of hard-won values and principles. The significance of the part that Kate [Pearson] played in carrying design ideas forward is clearly evidenced in the account in section 8.2 above. Kate was a young member of the GLA's Architecture and Urbanism Unit when the Olympic bid was promoted. She described herself as 'someone who knows the whole picture' and who 'appreciates the interplay' of ideas and schemes. Kate worked under the direction of the senior members of what was a very small but influential group of urban designers in the GLA. She quickly became a leading urban designer working on the Lea Valley and the Olympics, eventually moving across from the GLA/LDA to the ODA and then the OPLC:

Kate excerpt 6

The head of the team had this phrase: 'do the drawings and you win'. When the early plans were drawn up for the Olympics, I was relatively new to the whole thing and so I didn't necessarily have the perspective of how we fitted in with the bigger picture. Someone said at a certain point: 'you're really powerful in this'. I said, 'Really? That's a very interesting

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slant.'

This perspective testifies to the importance of relatively informal themes; the urban designers exemplified a group within the policy community who were able to use their discursive skills to good effect and consequently secured significant authority within the process of urban change:

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Kate excerpt 7

I did quite a lot of drawings myself, though of course EDAW were leading the work with Allies and Morrison. Me and [named individual] from the GLA Planning Team were really, really hands on with that. I think my subsequent career in the Lower Lea Valley is really established then; that was the foundation stone for everything that followed because it gave me a really in-depth sense of the Lower Lea Valley as a whole place. Most people who just nibble bits of it and never really appreciate the interplay.

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In this period, a few agencies and individuals beyond the main parties found ways to carry on; they seemed to operate out of the limelight, but their work grew in strategic importance in terms of the longer-term changes that gathered momentum up to and beyond 2012. A Newham councillor spoke of a recognition among them that they 'must stop fighting' with the now-leading agencies, and they repositioned themselves as positive supporters of the Games and champions of initiatives to secure jobs and opportunities for their residents. The Chief Executive of Leaside Regeneration Company, working with Mark Bostock at ARUP, wrote a strategy paper arguing for the development of a world-leading higher education and business innovation strategy for the Valley. The Vice Chancellor of Loughborough University tenaciously pursued this agenda, driving a process that culminated in Loughborough bringing its advanced engineering faculty to the Park: part of a wider economic and educational transformation that really blossomed beyond 2012. British Waterways leveraged their position as owners of the waterways that form the spine of the landscape and an essential layer in the area's infrastructure; they authored and oversaw the metamorphosis of the rivers and canals, in ways that now exemplify the earliest 'Water City' vision for the area.

Scores of smaller organisations lined up to engage with the inevitable changes and the story of the Games. Arts and culture bodies formed, working under the umbrella brand 'Stratford Rising'; they tried with mixed success to ride the wave of interest and take advantage of the opportunities for funding and promotion. Some succeeded, while other local charities, voluntary bodies and civic organisations reported experiences that they were misunderstood, ignored and overlooked despite the insistent narratives of inclusion and opportunity promoted by the official bodies. As one chief executive of a charity put it to me: 'we managed to survive despite the coming and going of the Games and all those experts'.

The Games project forced the resolution of the competing interests of the public sector on the one hand, and on the other hand the major landowners of the Stratford City scheme and the International Quarter. The Stratford City Planning Consent was granted in October 2004, just before the Olympic Consent was granted at a joint planning meeting. When the bid was won it became obvious the Olympics would necessarily interfere with the Stratford City scheme. Some of the land in the Stratford City planning consent was needed in order to build the Olympic Village. At the same time, one of the partners in the original consortium left, and Westfield became the major promoter of the scheme. Westfield wanted to deliver the shopping centre, but not the housing area that would be needed for Athletes Village. Lend Lease agreed to develop the housing neighbourhood so that it would form the Athletes Village during Games-time, and then the development would be converted afterwards to form housing. Lend Lease pulled out because of the slump in 2008, so the public sector had to step back in. The second piece of the jigsaw was the International Quarter, which was to be developed on land owned and controlled by London & Continental Railways, via a Joint Venture agreement with Lend Lease, who were also involved in the Westfield development. The Olympic Park and the International Quarter were next to each other: two big bits of public sector land next to each other with different arrangements, no coordination between them and a private sector Joint Venture agreement. Multi-million pound financial arrangements were involved. Diplomacy at the highest level was essential to manage the agreements with private sector partners to keep the scheme on track.

Dramatically, Mayor Ken Livingstone lost the Mayoral election in 2008 to Conservative Boris Johnson, and subsequently, in 2010, the Labour Party lost the national election and was replaced by David Cameron's Conservative Government. There were no immediate or overt changes to the narrative for the Olympic Park in this period. Despite some personnel changes in the OPLC/LLDC, incoming Mayor Johnson committed to delivering the Games:

Matthew excerpt 10

It was quite a jolt to the system in that you suddenly had a Conservative man arriving on the scene from nowhere and there was massive organisational transformation, certainly for the LDA, responsible for Legacy at that time. Suddenly everything to do with the LDA was perceived by the incoming people as bloated, wasting resources, inefficient and even talk of corruption. There was a lot of fear in the LDA, and I think there was fear in the local authorities and wider London about LDA programmes being cut to the bone. So, there was kind of a big review and ultimately the LDA was managed down to the point of closure. Its legacy responsibilities were between 2008 and 2009 transferred across to the OPLC.

Appreciating how catastrophic it would be to introduce changes that derail the process, Mayor Johnson decided to maintain the appointment of Livingstone's close political ally Neale Coleman as his chief officer in charge of the Games and advisor in the LLDC. Boris Johnson struck up a consensual relationship with the Olympic Host Boroughs and incorporated their 'Convergence' agenda and its rhetoric into the redrafted London Plan.

8.4 Authoring the legacy agenda

The Mayor of London and the Government had a number of objectives linked to their support for the Games, and the regeneration of the deprived areas of east London was a consistent theme. There was a recognition that legacy was at risk at this stage. A decision was taken that DCLG, DCMS and London government would have three-way ownership of legacy, so 50% owned by central government, split between the two departments, and 50% by the Mayor; and they would set up a dedicated legacy company which would become known as OPLC, with responsibility for the east London legacy agenda. It would take all legacy activity out of the LDA and put it in a

focused place. OPLC was constituted in summer 2009, though it took a long gestation period to get the governance arrangements working:

Matthew

We were saying that you needed to pay more attention to legacy, there needed to be a vehicle that was more independent of the ODA to carry it forward. And to be fair to people then, a lot of people were saying, well what ARE we going to do there afterwards?

The GLA started the discussions with Government about a legacy vehicle. An agreement was made to establish a 50:50 Companies Act Company, the OPLC. A Chair and Chief Executive were appointed. It was clear from the start that unless OPLC owned the land then it wouldn't be able to effectively deliver legacy. At that point, the LDA controlled the land, but they needed to lose the debt that had been accrued through the land assembly process. A deal was eventually struck, and the land was transferred to the OPLC. Further negotiations took place, and ultimately OPLC, and afterwards the LLDC, were created with powers both to set planning policies and make planning decisions. In April 2012, the LLDC was created, through a restructuring of the OPLC and an extension of its powers, to achieve the ambition that it would own the land and be responsible for the long-term development and management of the Park. LLDC had remarkable powers, to set planning policies for an area extending beyond the Olympic Park into the so-called fringe neighbourhoods, to promote development schemes and also to make planning decisions. The special planning arrangements created for the ODA, created to ensure there could be no barrier to the delivery of the Olympic Park in time for the 2012 Games, were reproduced and transferred into the LLDC.

8.5 The play of counter-narratives in the stories of the Lea Valley 2007-2012

Two stories appeared to be travelling in parallel, one at quite a different pace from the other. On the one hand, the Lower Lea OAPF (GLA, 2007) was written, setting out the long-term vision for the regeneration of the Lea Valley, and introducing a number of specific planning policies around some broad themes. On the other hand, the break

neck process to prepare the Olympic Park for the Games was underway and the realities of all the commitments and obligations were dawning on those involved. Power and authority was being exercised in both cases, but the form that power takes was quite different.

Power was exercised in different ways in this period. An urban designer asserts that power was exercised by holding a pen, producing a graphic story, one that framed what is valued and established how things should take place. Authority was derived from the intimate engagement with, and knowledge of, the area and the resultant precision in defining what was possible: where the connections should go, what the obstacles were, what narrative arose from the Valley-wide perspective:

> **Kate**
> We started by thinking about how you could nurture what's there, and the good qualities of what's there, whether it's the landscape, whether it's the heritage, the physical environment, the businesses, the communities that are there - it should be about inclusive change.

Conversely, power was asserted by a government pledge, almost a blank cheque written by the Treasury, to deliver the Olympic Park on time for the Games, written into the submission to the IOC, but then, given the unanticipated bid-win scenario, a binding promise. Some people with long standing intimate local knowledge, expertise and a commitment to established values managed to use their practical knowledge to maintain and exercise influence. Conversely, authority derived from the tightly controlled pact between London and central government, whose officers had found a way to work together, with new relationships of trust established between a small number of individuals in key positions of power. One narrative emphasised the importance of what was already in the Valley; the counter-narrative made the challenge simpler by treating the Park as a clean slate.

The mantra for the period, the dominant narrative, was the imperative to deliver the Games 'on time and on budget'. Much energy went into establishing the 'real cost of the Games' following the bid decision, and Treasury and the London government settled on a figure:

Matthew excerpt 11

That's what brought the whole financial clarity to our heads because you couldn't let a contract without financial cover, and there wasn't enough financial cover. There was no getting away from it and that brought into sharp focus the question: what's the real budget here? The original £2.375bn came from the ARUP report, which was a different scheme and contained different assumptions from those written into the winning bid. Between 2005 and the end of 2006 the real budget had to be sorted out.

8.6 A thousand issues to resolve

The reality of the development of the Park created innumerable delivery challenges. The excerpt below from a British Waterways manager is illustrative of the level of complexity of the scheme. This is one example chosen from numerous stories. It demonstrates both the technical challenges but also the political nature of the issues that had to be confronted at every step.

Scott excerpt 2

If you remember, the first EDAW master plan was to do with cutting back the waterway walls and creating a huge almost natural riverside, almost like a tidal flood plain and estuary, encouraging birds and what have you. British Waterways knew at the time that that was impossible. It's feasible but it's not viable because the cost of breaking out those walls and to move those banks back was a non-starter. Yet it took 18 months maybe even more to come back to a more realistic vision for the Olympic Park. If you just knock back those big concrete walls which were built in the thirties as a flood defence system, you'll find it's all contaminated land behind. We were arguing against the original proposal for about two years. The Environment Agency had bought into it. While we're on the subject, the EA said, 'over our dead bodies are you going to build a lock to impound the waterways'. They're still alive and we've done it.

The accord struck between the GLA and the Treasury came under pressure when the Conservatives took control, first, of City Hall (2008) and then, second, of Government (2010). The Government's policy was to close down the ostensibly profligate and inefficient LDA. Once the LDA was stripped of its role in delivering legacy, having

increasingly directed its London wide resources towards it, the incoming London Mayor had little trouble winding down the organisation.

With the ODA carrying the primary responsibility for developing the Olympic Park, the legacy agenda became a plot within a plot, authored initially by the LDA, then passed to OPLC/LLDC. While OPLC/LLDC's legacy discourse was focused on the Park and its fringes, the Olympic Host Boroughs adapted and reframed the legacy agenda, enlarging its focus and directing attention towards the life chances of residents in the wider sub-region. In this period, with all eyes on the development of the Park for the Games, the regeneration of the Lea Valley became the counter-narrative:

Matthew excerpt 12

Around this time (in the period following the bid decision), ownership of the wider regeneration agenda sort of fell away. There was a lot of socio-economic work being developed in the LDA and beyond, but the overall leadership and how that fitted into the emerging delivery arrangements was less clear. The was some expectation originally that the ODA could be responsible for regeneration, but it became pretty clear soon that because of their primary responsibilities to deliver the site and the facilities that they really didn't have the focus or the bandwidth to look at the wider agendas.

Regeneration was a story authored by some longer-standing members of the establishment; a memory that some strove to sustain against the imperatives of the day. These were the people committed to the development of 'a proper urban place' to quote one respondent, or more generally those who in the internal debates sided with 'the communities' as well as with the Olympic project per se. Progressively, the development of LLDC absorbed the regeneration agenda into the legacy mission. They recruited a number of leading and experienced champions of the regeneration agenda from the LDA, and from the local area, into senior positions in LLDC.

Many of the smaller battles for the future of the Park became the site of contested narratives. A number of higher education bodies were interested in creating student residential accommodation in Stratford; but leading protagonists countered with the argument that if east London was to become a location associated with world-leading

uses, then planners must insist that faculty from prestigious universities, not just student residences, be located there. British Waterways meanwhile battled on multiple fronts. In order to impound water and create navigable stretches within the watercourses, they had to overcome the Environment Agency's insistence that the River Lea's tidal flows must be sustained. In a separate battle, we learned from the quotes above that a British Waterways director had successfully insisted that steps be introduced to enable the public to move between the concourses of the Park and the lower levels of the canals flowing below; the conflict with the policy to create an 'accessible park' was overcome by the incorporation of both steps and accessible slopes throughout the Park. The dominant story of the Park's future evolved through numerous iterations, as smaller battles were fought and resolved.

The OAPF's planning policies were underpinned by narrative themes. These themes were not a dominant feature of the document, though, as with the example of 'the tear in the fabric', they appeared discursively in the conversations about the document and its policies. The narrative themes, in this sense, acted as communicative tools through which the ambitions of the Plan, in this case the OAPF, were articulated and shared.

CHAPTER 9: FINDINGS 2012 – 2015

9.1 Introduction

This chapter, the story of the final period, once again follows the structure of an introduction followed, respectively, by sections analysing the construction of place, authorship and agency, and counter-narrative. The interviews I carried out to gather evidence took place over the summer and autumn in 2015, just at the end point of the study period and my chronological account. Therefore, reflections on the journey so far become 'present day' in this chapter.

9.2 Narrative constructions of the Lower Lea as a place 2012-2015

> In the fifty years that had preceded London's Olympic preparations, the Lower Lea had struggled with a difficult inheritance from a more industrial past, and decades on the margins. Right in the heart of east London, it had become one of our great city's most physically fragmented, environmentally compromised and socially deprived districts. The Games have reversed that.
> (Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, 2012)

Transition

Immediately after the Paralympic Games, the Park was closed to the public once again and underwent a process of 'transition' to prepare for a re-opening in legacy mode. LLDC was under pressure to remove temporary structures and reconfigure the infrastructure to enable the Park to re-open on time, to establish management arrangements for the public park and open spaces, to secure agreements for the long-term use and management for the permanent facilities including the main stadium, to release the Athletes Village for its conversion into a residential neighbourhood, to secure developers for the sites earmarked for development and to establish commercial and community uses to generate income and to animate the Park with sufficient drama befitting the legacy promise. Two parks sat within the whole: the Northern Park was a more natural wild-space landscape that offered a route upriver towards the Lea beyond London; South Park was a harder urban network of concourses and spaces. A group of six 'development platforms' (LLDC, 2016) were marketed as development sites for housing and commercial development. The main Stadium was converted to a mixed-use but soccer-led stadium, a deal with West Ham

United rescuing it from the earlier plan to scale it down and return it for athletics-led uses. The Velodrome and the Aquatics Centre were soon opened and in public use. Narratives of place were re-formed to suit contemporary purposes: plan-making and property marketing to support new neighbourhoods, brand-building for LLDC, the Park and estate agents, legacy story-telling for the public and for local government, events promotion and operational management.

The scale of the Park was an opportunity and a threat; even on busy days visitors were swallowed by the open spaces and it was difficult to generate a sense of animation, especially in poor weather. However, the spaces were perfect for large open-air gatherings and events and early programming demonstrated how the Park could contribute to the life of the capital city.

Older stories of place in a new context

Longer-standing ambitions were evident within the cocktail of storytelling post 2012, in part because individuals kept the long-term visions alive, and in part because the structure of the emerging place itself exemplified the vision of the early masterplans. The romantic English landscape of the Park expressed an embedded story, one that introduced of a sense of the picturesque to the otherwise wild space of the flood plain.

The original masterplan concept was to create the ideal of English parkland, describing a flowing landscape, with the sports buildings like pavilions in a romantic landscape. That was the reason for placing the Velodrome at the top and the stadium at the bottom, with other buildings that just touched in on the Park. It was a classical landscape order: Capability Brown writ large. This theme, present in the early ambitions of the Arc, of Opportunity and pushed forward in the masterplans to support the Olympic bid, proposed that the landscape, once revealed from beneath the scars of industrial pollution, would stimulate a collective memory of something lost. Articulating such values and ideas required skill, and winning commitment to them required tactical and political nous. It is in this practical activity that narrative constructions of ideas and themes were critical to the success and quality of the outcomes.

George excerpt 3

As a landscape architect, the place I come from is I am interested in landscape structure and I am interested in the larger story of landscape green infrastructure in the service of a bigger city system. Thinking about the restoration of the ecology of the Lea, the creation of the flood plain that was in the sunken Valley, I felt really passionate about that, and I am extremely proud that we got all of that that big ecological content into the plans. The way that the rivers work, to me that is the heart of that Park, and you can do whatever else you like on top of it.

Animating the Park: a busy place

The Park and its legacy would emerge from the shadow of the Games. The period demanded reflection on the early promises and confrontation with the realism of what could now be achieved. The London Games had built its reputation in no small part on its promise that it would get legacy right and that there would be no white elephants. There were twin pressures to drive forward long-term redevelopment and the larger corporate deals, while animating the Park from the outset. The sense of urgency within LLDC generated a tendency to experiment, at best, or, at worst, to 'throw things' at the Park. The busy animation of the Park with art, culture and events curated by LLDC, created its own slightly surreal cultural ambiance that reinforced the sense of separation between the Park and the areas that surrounded it; a relationship that needed to time to settle and grow.

George excerpt 4

I have a suspicion that the Park will get simpler over time. One of the tendencies with public realm is to throw a lot at it to make it more appealing to a point where you break it, and actually taking it all out again makes it more appealing.

I think to some extent it's filling up with a lot of stuff. If you look at some of the London Parks from the Vauxhall Leisure Gardens to Crystal Palace, a lot of these exhibition type amusement parks tend to go through a cycle, and then people end up taking stuff out, because less is more eventually. But for while were every good idea finds a home. I think that is part of park evolution: you try a load of stuff out, and if it works it stays, and if it doesn't, or the fashion changes, it comes down again. I think it's about satisfying a real here-and-now need in an urban park setting. It will ultimately respond to the nature of the population that grows up around it, and as long as the dialogue between park management and community is strong

enough, it should respond. It's a canvas on which things happen.

Social structure and place: a relationship in text and on the ground

The early masterplans promoted a landscape vision based on the riverine qualities of the Valley and these created a spine for the development proposals. They interpreted the landscape and generated propositions about the proposed morphology.

George excerpt 5

Do you remember the big push to build up to the edge of the river? The people who advocated that didn't appreciate the scale of the place. If you think about the existing Parks of London, the idea of separation and distance, and remoteness from the edge is really important and you and have to get far from the edge in order for things to happen. I was deeply troubled by those pushes from some quarters.

The plans for the Park also imposed a broader structure, informed by the twin requirements to host the Games and to enable the legacy developments; this structure spoke to values about the relationship between the new and existing communities as well as the fabric of the city. The plans didn't just seek to encourage and regulate development, they set out to foster a desired and desirable community. A dialogue was evident between the structure of the plans, the emergent structure of the landscape and the environment in landscape and built environment and the social structure of the area. These three elements - plan/text, built environment and social structure - stood in a dynamic relationship with each other.

George excerpt 6

We set standards about the sort of usability of the Park from a disability and access point of view. We managed to lay out all of those contours so that everywhere worked, there was nowhere that you couldn't go. We did a lot of work about how you plug that into the adjacent communities as well, so we had this idea of an accessible landscape. And then we talked about the Northern Park and the big space, somebody said, 'Why?' Well, because you want to have big mela festival picnics, you know, think of the picnics you could have up there.

At best the Park was a spectacle: it attracted streams of visitors, tourists, students and schoolchildren and, on sunny days, the Park's play recreational spaces were alive and

reflective of east London's diverse communities. The urban park demonstrated in its early life that it was capable of responding to diverse demands.

George excerpt 7

I thought that the big spatial qualities of the Olympic Park should be retained because there was a place that you could do big space things, so why fill it up with loads of junk? When you've got big space opportunities in a city, then bloody take them. I mean look at the London parks, the Royal Parks are pretty simple with really small areas of interventions around; most of it is about space.

A brand story and the life of the neighbourhood

The corporate branding of LLDC itself and the earnest marketing of East Village and, progressively the newer sites, proliferated in the imagery around the district, creating an otherworldly sense of combined welcome and exclusion. Westfield Shopping Centre always threatened to be a place of high-end consumption and it fulfilled its promise of being a privately managed shopping mall in a deprived district. That said, an inversion materialised; the designer shops, the restaurant chains and even the champagne bars were replete with crowds of east Londoners. Essex had not crowded out Stratford; rather, Stratford inherited some of the amenities of Brentwood, Chelmsford and Colchester. The 'International Quarter', the zone of commercial offices between Westfield and the Park, was developing fast, bringing white-collar jobs to the district. Despite the proliferation of cranes and the high specification of the spaces here, the commercial property market in Stratford remained hesitant. Early occupiers were actually public sector bodies, including the Financial Services Authority and TfL. Carpenters Estate broodingly overshadowed the southern end of the Park from across the railway, an exemplar of the failure to improve social housing and testament to ongoing stagnation in life chances of sections of the long-standing residents in the wider area.

The lines are drawn: life beyond the Park

Beyond the Olympic Park, incremental change in the Lower Lea proceeded slowly, effecting piecemeal transformation of some sites and places, while some sites and streets lingered on in more or less shabby and ignored conditions. The Lower Lea remained a 'work in progress' if one believed that places evolve in ways determined

by plans. Alternatively, the wider Lea could be read as an exemplar of 'organic' development, with evidence of the uneven influence of market forces, giving rise to success in some places while, as one architect suggests, the Park 'becomes more and more the diamond in the shit compared to what it could have been'.

George excerpt 8

Well, let's take Stratford High Street. Some unmitigated crap has gone up along there. So we do all of this work on carefully balanced housing and accommodation provision to look for a balanced community in this relatively small area of London, and then we ring it with a forest of one bedroom micro-flats: the jewel that we have created! So every day that another permission goes in and another building goes up, the ability of the Olympic Park to swing the pendulum in the East End of London gets reduced.

George excerpt 9

We saw the North Park as a bigger more naturalistic feature, an extension of the Upper Lea Valley, while the South Park would represent a deeper urbanisation. I always talked about the transept from the Thames to the rural hinterland of London, and I loved this idea of the Park that de-industrialised as it went north. I thought it was a lovely idea; one that was easy to explain to people. And so a lot of the debate was about where was the line of that conversion, as it were. We only got to that in places, and I always felt that you could deliver a lot of the urban experience lower down the Lea Valley. South of the railway line[7] you had the chance to. There's some very big bits of land down there, there's the bloody gas holders, there's the bit round the lock.

In some neighbourhoods, such as Poplar, the curatorial hand of public bodies was much in evidence; while some bemoaned the loss of social housing into the quasi-public hands of housing associations, decades of investment in housing stock, public amenities and the public realm has had an obvious impact on the neighbourhoods. Many families had remained in the area since its redevelopment for social housing after World War II and had integrated with newer immigrants, some from the Bangladeshi communities around Brick Lane, now joined by newer immigrants from

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[7] There are two railway lines that run east-west across the Lea Valley to the south of what is now the Olympic Park. The individual is referring to the industrial land south of both of these lines.

Europe and Africa. The attention on the Olympics masked the longer running stories of improvement, evolution or stagnation that have beset the districts beyond the Park.

George excerpt 10

There was a sense that all the shiny baubles have to go in to the one place you've got control of. What we were trying to say in the Opportunity Framework is that, actually, if you push some of the baubles down into the deeper Lea Valley, not only were you pushing them nearer to more deprived communities who needed this stuff, but also you could use them as triggers for change in those areas. Actually, what I think we've got now is just opportunistic land development, because it's somewhere within spitting distance of the Olympic Park.

The local economy of the Park

The economic story of the Park seemed to emerge by chance. Yes, it is true that champions in the past insisted that east London should be a location for London's most prestigious institutions, and that without those ambitions, the universities would have brought student accommodation but not faculty to the Olympic Park and Stratford. But the contours of the story, with its specifics of digital media, robotics and creative making, emerged in the latest chapters of the story. If the pioneers for Stratford were begging, borrowing and stealing in the mid 1990s, one gets the feeling that the same tenacity was still being exercised in 2015 to attract some of London's most innovative companies into the Park, albeit that the bar of quality has been irrevocably raised.

After the 2012 Games, the LLDC had placed a greater focus on economic development, as compared to the earlier plans that had prioritised housing development. The extract shows that serendipity plays a part, and also demonstrates how confidence grew among the agencies involved that new economic and cultural occupiers could be attracted into the area, spurred along by hard work and good fortune.

Graham excerpt 4

Here East is a great triumph for everyone. There was a long fight in the early days to make sure that the building is sort of permanent, so it had to meet Building Regulations standards. It was difficult to persuade the ODA to do it. But nobody really knew what was going to happen

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to it. A number of proposals didn't come off and then in the middle of January 2013, we got a call from BT who say, we want to put BT sport in there and we're either going to go there, or we're going to go to Salford. The only issue is, we need to have our studio completely fitted out and ready to broadcast by the end of May and this is the middle of January. There's no lease, there's no planning, there's nothing. The main credit rests with BT who did an incredible job in terms of fitting out. They did it in four months. Remarkable really. Once we got BT in there, that really underpinned the bigger deal on the whole building. It gave them an anchor tenant; they've done some terrific deals. We've got Loughborough coming in, and we're going to get UCL, we're going to get the Institute of Robotics in there, we've got the Advanced Propulsion Centre. We've got loads of high tech R&D, media, tech, you know, you name it. It's just phenomenal.

Stitching the hole in the urban fabric: a work in progress

In one sense, the reality of the development of QEOP overcame the (albeit contested) narrative of fragmentation, inaccessibility and pollution and degradation associated with the post-industrial past of the area. There was a legible, bounded place with some established uses and a purposive, credible programme to realise the vision for all of the allocated development sites. The land inside the boundaries of the Park, had become territory owned and managed by LLDC, the public realm reflecting less and less the former Olympic Park and more and more the emerging 'legacy' uses.

The delineation between new urban fabric and the older neighbourhoods spoke to the social divide between new and existing communities and various interventions were mounted by LLDC to soften the cliff edge.

Scott excerpt 3

Ordinary people are saying, this Olympic Park is over there but it's not for us as we can't get there. The ODA had done a lot of work to create bridges and connections, but a lot of these were bridges in the middle of the Park to move the spectators around but there was still a lot of work to do to make the connections beyond. The legacy of Victorian infrastructure is a big problem here and across London: the railway line into Stratford, the first one, went across the marshes on an embankment and it is still there. The Overground is still high level, though now it is used by the Docklands Light Rail. Then you add some rivers into the mix, a lot of them, and you add in not really very many roads because there weren't really any places to put the roads because it was marshes. You've still got the hole in the urban fabric.

These boundaries were spatial, but they also captured a sense of time. If urban change was accelerated by the development of the Olympic Park, then a slower but distinctive quality, pace and scale of change was taking place at the Park's fringes. Beyond the fringe, change was unfolding under different dynamics and beyond the influence of the Games altogether. The LLDC had been granted plan-making and decision powers for the districts at the periphery of the Park, and the strategy of 'stitching the fringe' informed LLDC's efforts to influence the evolution of those neighbourhoods where LLDC did not own the majority of the land. This was the latest chapter in a story of boundary definition, expressing a political tension between delivering the agendas of Games and legacy, that had run right from the outset.

Longing for a return to the place of the past

The Lea Valley was, for many years, defined by its industrial inheritance. Psychogeographers had discovered a lost world in the pre-Olympic Lea Valley and built folklores out of the traces of its past and the accidental qualities of its present; they bemoaned the erasure of this liminal world by the Olympics. The businesses of the time 'before the world had discovered the Lea Valley' were all the more fascinating for being hidden among the squalor, as if gothic treasures sparkled in the enclosures hidden behind the gates and factory doors. In their pessimism about the present conditions in the Valley at the hands of Westfield and the Government, some extreme critics of the Olympics hoped for a day when the flood plains below the new developments would swallow them up, and the Lea would return to its natural condition.

By 2015, legacy had become the dominant narrative for understanding the past: this land is a product of the legacy aspirations connected with the 2012 Games. It was the memory of the Games that provided the traces of the past. The temporary venues, the planting and the crowds were all carefully repaired and made ready for 'legacy mode'. The word 'legacy' was the evidence that the past has been imaginatively rewritten. Industry still featured in the story of the Lea Valley's past, but now it had become subsumed into legacy discourse. Industry was recast as a story of 'heritage', a narrative adopted by the Legacy Company. Heritage drew on a story of a thriving Victorian past, incorporated into place-brands, reflected for example in the naming of

Sweetwater residential neighbourhood after the Calico Sweet Factory, and into preserved and repurposed Victorian buildings and streets. Even the story of industry became folded into the Games: Games legacy swept up the story of industrial past and retold it in new ways. The past was reconstituted as the story of 2012, the dominant memory in official circles for as long as the imperative to deliver a 'legacy' persists.

9.3 Narrative constructions of agency and authorship 2012-2015

Mayor Boris Johnson[8] established the OPLC - and then the LLDC - the organisational vehicle through which he could impose his will on the future of the Park. His close relationship with the Conservative national government after 2010 meant he was able to concentrate considerable power in LLDC, with its powers to set planning policy and make planning decisions, and its land ownership. The Mayor's negotiation around the arrangements for repayment of £387m of debt, incurred in assembling land for the Olympics, enabled the new vehicle to benefit from future uplift in land values (GLA, 2010). Brakes on the profitability of the project include the appetite of the investment and development markets, the requirements to secure a long-term return on government investment, and the political obligation to make good on the legacy agenda.

Before 2012, Johnson's personal intervention in the Games was limited: his practical influence was most evidenced by his agreement with the steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, leading to the development of the ArcelorMittal Orbit Tower in the Park. After the Games, Johnson's personal signature on the Park was more profound: he was the principal ambassador in negotiating agreements with culture and education institutions for 'Olympicopolis' including the V&A, Sadler's Wells, UCL and the London College of Fashion; his officers struck the agreement in this period that led to the Here East digital, creative and education development. Boris's vision depended on the writing down in accounts of valuable housing land, and the sale of one of the development platforms below market value. More broadly, as evidenced by the 'Olympicopolis' brand, Boris struck an ambassadorial tone in which his own profile and personality was writ large. This was variously warmly welcomed as

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[8] The study period does not include the period from May 2016 when Sadiq Khan replaced Boris Johnson as the elected Mayor of London.

ambassadorial brilliance (Crerar cited in BethPH, 2016) or vilified as profligate vanity (Weaver, 2017).

A time for reflection

2015 offered a moment for reflection. The Games and legacy were perceived as the product of public intervention at a scale unthinkable without the Games. This led many of my respondents to look backwards and assess their effectiveness in influencing interventions, measuring their intentions against post-Games outcomes. Individuals saw themselves as champions of a public sector, as the 'author of exemplary projects' and 'the holder of the strategy'. In 2015, the Park was in its infancy as a legacy project: agreements with developers for the development platforms were coming forward faster than expected but a twenty-year programme was required to build out the vision.

Stories people told of themselves took various forms: they are often the 'hero', battling and succeeding against the odds; sometimes stories draw on the disorder of moments, constructing stories of comedy, wherein disorder is finally recognised and order restored, or tragedy, whereby failures remain unresolved. Here is one example of a 'heroic' story. A British Waterways manager reflects on the legacy of opening up the rivers and waterways in and around the Olympic Park:

Scott excerpt 4

The big move was the empowerment of the waterway. Before we did what we did, there was no water in the river in the main waterworks river, now next to Zaha Hadid's Aquatics Centre that was the Olympic swimming pool. Twice a day, as the tide receded, all you would have done and seen was a concrete channel with smelly mud in it. To make our point about the importance to the Olympics of impounding the water, we highlighted the issue using time lapse photography; you could see the water go down and trolleys and mud and mess and God only knows what. Conversely, sometimes you couldn't sail underneath the bridges because the tide was too high. So the whole idea was to make it more accessible, creating a flow of both people and water transport. People like to get on and off boats at various different places so we had to control that water level. We created a tidally controlled system at Three Mills Lock, with a system to allow fish to pass through. Through interventions like these, we can see people enjoying the water spaces around the Olympic Park; that was an important

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contribution by British Waterways.

The same episode, was reconstructed as tragedy in this counter-narrative:

…British Waterways are about to impound the Old River Lea and prevent the tidal flows into the river via Prescott Channel in Bow. They are in the later stages of constructing a lock and a barrage at Prescott Channel. Their contractors will, sometime in June, fit the second of two 'fish belly gates' next to the lock and then raise them both hydraulically to achieve 'tidal lock out'.

This will mean in the future that the water in this whole stretch of the Old River Lea will be maintained around the current high water level. This will remove completely the low water conditions which the Bream are actively seeking for spawning.

…Even with a fish pass fitted to the Prescott Channel water control structure it is difficult to know how Bream will in future find the right conditions in the impounded river Lea to spawn. It would seem that this year we are seeing this wonderful natural spectacle near Friends bridge for the last time.

Excerpt from a post on the Games Monitor website, May 2008

A number of important individuals who played influential roles in shaping aspects of change in the Valley could be characterised in New Labour discourse, a political outlook they shared, as 'social entrepreneurs' (Mawson, 2008), an epithet is applied to an individual by virtue of the action they take rather than the position they hold. In the arc of this story, those individuals were important in the pre-Olympic period, and they became important once again when the arrangements for delivering the Games recede. Put simply, in a world of more piecemeal and incremental urban change, the actions of networks of players are the archetypal ways that changes happen. This style of urban change was temporarily overtaken by a singular style of organisation managed from the centre. In the post-Games world, there is evidence of some of the longer-standing actors sensing a return to an earlier style of urban management, as evidenced in this quote from an urban designer:

Kate excerpt 8
If you get someone excited about what you're trying to achieve and you take them on the journey with you, whether they are the planners or the developers, then you've got some

chance of getting there, because you're trying to achieve the same thing. And I guess the world divides between people who are interested in process and people who are interested in what you're trying to achieve, and you always have to find the people that you can get excited about the outcome, and then you've got a hope.

Last words: we dreamed it!

The archetypal hero's tale among the officers and politicians who stayed the course in the Lea Valley is a story of loss and return, as well as triumph over the odds. The heroes set out with a dream in the late 1990s and early 2000s. They are aligned with the local area, and subjectively identify with 'the community'; though they seek allies with like-minded people at all levels of government and in the private sector, they are suspicious of the bureaucratic outlook. For these people, 'agency' is disrupted by the arrival first of regional government and second by the machinery to deliver the Olympics. Tactically, they acknowledge that they cannot control what is happening, but carve out ways to engage with the Games while maintaining a commitment to their ambitions for the people and the Valley. They apparently battle from the side-lines for a time, though they are able to build powerful, high profile programmes and consistently influence the rhetoric of the Games and its promise to deliver for local communities. Unlike the somnambulist in the Cabinet of Dr Caligari, the heroes in this romance are not sent to sleep by the forces of evil. Eventually, our heroes emerge from the shadows and take centre stage. The Games are over, but this group remain, with the memory of the long-term vision intact. Few appreciate the nature of the journey; only a few insiders who made it happen, despite the odds. For our heroes, 'making it happen' does not mean delivering the Games; rather it means leveraging the process to secure benefits for east London and for east Londoners.

Tom excerpt 3

The Park, I think is becoming the astonishing place we wanted it to be.

The Park is full, there is the school class dancing in the fountain, there is another school class with the clipboards doing their research, and then there is the mother and the child, along with the elderly person, sitting around in the quiet spaces and that feels wonderful. You go into the Aquatics Centre and there is a bunch of people swimming, there is the training pool and another school class in the training pool learning to swim! There's Tom Daley teaching

people to dive off the board.

Then you've got these big institutions coming: V&A, Smithsonian, Sadler's Wells and UCL moving to Olympicopolis. Someone said to me the other day, you couldn't have dreamt all this, and I almost started to say, no, and then I said, No! Actually we DID! That's exactly what we dreamt of. You know, we dreamt that institutions of national and international renown and quality would want to come here, obviously because it's a cheap place to pitch up, but also because they saw opportunities for their own development because it's an exciting place and the people who live round here are exciting, and the institutions that they are meeting here are exciting. So you get Sadler's Wells and East London Dance agreeing to collaborate together, and you've got local schools, and you think: yeah, that's what we wanted!

9.4 The play of counter-narratives in the stories of the Lea Valley 2012-15

Following on from the excerpt above, and in keeping with the stories of the triumph of good over evil, the play of counter-narratives take a particular form in the stories told by respondents in 2015. They tend to be constructed around oppositions, wherein the favoured outcome materialises, often by way of an inversion, so that the counter-narrative becomes dominant. For example, here we see a small victory to secure a project that struggled to demonstrate its worth according to government appraisal guidance:

Scott excerpt 5

I'm very proud of what we achieved at Bow Flyover Bridge (a £2.5million award winning project that has created a system of accessible pedestrian walkways along the canal, providing a means to cross over the A12 Arterial Road on the Blackwall Tunnel approach section). It's another real standout project, which no doubt saved a life already. You have to put things into context in a time of cost benefit analysis. Sometimes, you've got to say hang on a life is about a million quid, so the investment in the bridges is not a lot of money really.

Different perspectives were given by the focus on the 'Park' or on the 'Lea Valley', and they either clashed or complemented each other. LLDC's business imperatives were onerous and there was so much to be done that ignoring the many challenges beyond the core area would have been understandable. Equally, the development of

the legacy vision for the Park was constructed by some as an important step in the unfolding story of the Lea Valley as a whole. The 'legacy' narrative offered a way to adopt and sustain this longer term outlook, a formulation for considering ways in which the rest of the Valley might, in the future, return to centre stage, as a further phase driven by the changes in Stratford and the Olympic Park. The inversion sees the Lea Valley return to become the dominant outlook after the Games. One informant rhetorically suggested that there was an inevitability of the outward flow of this impact given the Valley's connections: 'water flows', he asserted.

Scott excerpt 6

The idea of the water and the river valley providing connectivity right down to the Thames – that got lost. I think the work on restoring the watercourses and regenerating the area below the Olympic Park maybe got knocked back as a result of the Olympics maybe by five or ten years. I think it would have been more regenerated now than it is currently my own personal view.

Those with longer memories and a stake in the development of the wider area influenced the ways that the LLDC mission was composed, insisting it looked outward beyond the Park. The Park/Lea Valley counterpoint was either a challenge to a narrow managerialist approach to developing the Park's assets, or a way to enrich its story by engaging with its geographic and social context. Boundaries, on plans, in policies and on the ground, became the fulcrum for the resolution of the tensions.

To commit to improving the area to the benefit of local people did not mean abandoning a strategic approach. On the contrary, 'heroic' characters saw themselves as champions who were true to long-term, strategic objectives, counter posed to the unthinking and the piecemeal.

Kate excerpt 9

We ended up getting about £100million. ODPM[9] effectively asked us to coordinate all of the physical public realm projects. The boroughs started off with this absolutely insane approach. They basically all emptied all of their cupboards of every single project they'd been wanting

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[9] Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Government Department

to do for the last 35 years: it was so random. I developed 10 strategic packages that were to do with all key routes leading into the Olympic Park, key town centres. I did all of the drawings and I wrote the narrative for it. We then presented the proposals back to Government and the penny dropped that something could be done here. The projects helped communicate the strategic principles.

Not every counter-narrative followed the formula of reversal from defeat to victory. As in early chapters, resolution of contradictions, moving the setting from one 'structured context for action' to another, sometimes involved minor defeats or compromises.

George excerpt 11

I said right at the beginning, there's this really authentic piece of London, deep East End, we've been running all of these conversations about the recycling of materials, discovering layers, we talked about ecology, we recovered rivers, reinstated ecology. But later these geometric mounds were stuck on, which are lovely looking things but it wasn't what we had planned. I remember sitting in on the early design presentations thinking somehow there has been a loss of connection between theory and outcome here, and you know, I mostly blame myself for it because I haven't explained myself well enough.

CHAPTER 10: ANALYSIS

10.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, I had focused on how 'place' and 'agency' are constructed by the people I interviewed. I traced 'authorship' as a sub-set of 'agency' in my transcripts. I also sought out counter-narratives, characterised by oppositional themes within the multiplicity of stories told. The elements of 'place', agency' and 'counter-narrative' form parts of a whole, within and across the time periods, and this begs the question about how these discrete parts interact with each other. Now, drawing on Kuhn's concept of the 'authoritative text', I analyse how these elements work in relation to each other. Kuhn (2017) discusses how such authoritative texts evolve through a 'lengthy process marked by ambiguity, sporadic development and struggle'. He demonstrates with reference to case studies that 'the moments of potential counter-narrative influence can provide unique insight on this process' (Kuhn, 2017, p.23). Kuhn qualifies earlier approaches to counter-narrative that focus on the relationships between master-narratives and counter-narratives (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004) and which explore how counter-narratives can give voice to minority voices, or those excluded from power, in various ways. Kuhn suggests that an unmediated counter-position use of narrative and counter-narrative risks treating the dominant narrative as singular and fixed. He suggests that the perspective of counter-narrative offers useful conceptual tools for researching the communicative processes through which authoritative texts evolve, drawing on multiple narrative themes, as tensions are experienced and choices made along the way.

In this chapter I draw together the elements of my analysis from previous chapters and consider them together. Firstly, in Section 10.2 I discuss my analysis of narrative themes in plans. Then in Section 10.3 I briefly comment on the structure of the main stories told, drawing a distinction between the structure of the dominant narrative (romance) and alternative structures found in counter-narratives (comedy, tragedy and satire). I go on to consider how agency, place and counter-narrative intertwine and re-form as the story evolves over time. I begin in Section 10.4 with a commentary and analysis of shifting place identity. Then, in Section 10.5 I examine the inter-relationship of counter-narrative and agency. I draw out the ways in which agency

evolves over time (10.6). Finally, I return to the concepts I selected in my methodology to guide my research: namely Giddens' structuration (10.7), Schutz's stocks of knowledge (10.8), and Plesske's concept of mentality (10.9). I use these concepts to guide my interpretation and analysis of my data and help me structure my findings.

10.2 Narrative themes in plans

In this section, I draw together a number of themes identifiable in planning documents and consider their relationship with each other in a process of categorisation. Although I derived the themes from a process of coding planning documents, I identified the themes through my analysis, and my interpretive choices shaped the themes I identified and their categorisation as shown in Table 3 below. Appendix 2 provides a synopsis of the narrative themes referred to in this section, along with a discussion of when and how they appeared in planning documents across the study period.

There are 2 meta-themes at play throughout the twenty-year period and that all the major planning strategies are configured around these 2 issues: 'London Growth' and 'East London Deprivation'. Firstly, the plans propose that the Lower Lea offers a location for investment and development driven by growth in London's population and economy and, secondly, that increasing wealth and prosperity in east London can be leveraged in ways that reduce deprivation and inequality. The weight given to each, the forms in which they are presented, the ways that propositions in plans express interaction, complementarity or divergence between these 2 meta-themes all depend on the political and institutional outlooks of plan-makers, leaders and agencies at particular times and in specific contexts.

The second category of 'planning priorities' is a group of over-arching themes, more or less common to Lower Lea plans throughout the period, related directly to the explicit spatial strategies and objectives in plans and urban regeneration programmes; they might be understood as 'technical themes'. They provide a focus for the investments and interventions by government institutions and speak to the

requirement for planning policies that can be used to determine planning applications from developers.

The third category, 'narrative themes in plans', is a selection of concepts drawn from planning texts that might be considered to construct a story of place, in that they convey specific meanings and carry interpretive force. My selection is not exhaustive, but the grouping is sufficient to enable me to explore how themes evolve and change over time. They also offer me a starting point for exploring the ways in which the meta-themes in set 1 are constructed in the various plans. I will argue that narrative themes such as those selected in set 3 are idiosyncratic expressions, or aesthetic choices and as such can be differentiated from more technical themes. These narrative themes offer flexibility and space for plans to respond to meta-themes such as 'growth' and 'deprivation', and to their context-specific interpretations by politicians, plan makers and leading actors. In this way, I suggest that they provide a bridge of 'intermediary meanings' between broader political and policy themes and the more technical work involved in plans. For the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the themes I have highlighted and consider the ways in which they respond to, interpret and construct the inter-relationship between the meta-themes of London Growth and East London Deprivation.

Table 3: Framework for narrative themes

SET 1		
	META THEMES	
	London Growth	East London Deprivation
SUB-THEMES (examples)	Create a market for development	Address poverty of local population: income, work, health, housing
	Attract investment and development	Address poverty of place: poor housing, environment degradation, lack of amenity, isolation
	Provide sites for new housing, commercial and retail developments	In this period: response to poverty shifts from welfare state to entrepreneurial state (opportunity, ambition, enterprise)
	Remediate land and improve infrastructure	Attract new communities: Gentrification: to change mix; Create middle class to bring wealth,

| | | education, spending power, volunteering |
| | | Immigration and demographic change |

SET 2			
PLANNING PRIORITIES	Linked sub-priorities		
CREATE PLOTS FOR DEVELOPMENT	Define (bounded) spatial zones	Define local areas for development and individual development plots	Release plots for housing, commercial and retail or other development.
FIX INDUSTRY	Protect Industrial Land	Release former industrial land for redevelopment (housing and jobs)	Keep useful industry and attract new business in dynamic economic sectors
CREATE A LINEAR PARK	Restore the Lower Lea River Valley	Create Parkland and Open Space	Create the Olympic Park
CREATE CENTRES	Establish Stratford as a Metropolitan Centre	Create a linked network of mixed use town and local centres, for retail, commerce	Create residential neighbourhoods
MAKE CONNECTIONS	Connect Stratford to Central London and Europe	Make connections across the Valley and between the Park and the Fringe	Make local places and individual developments 'porous'

SET 3					
	NARRATIVE THEMES IN PLANS				
Places of Exchange	Tear in the Fabric	Stratford City/Metropolitan	Stitching the Fringe	Greening the Valley/Park	Water City
	Olympic Games	Olympic Legacy	Convergence	Olympicopolis	Knowledge Economy

'Narrative themes' can logically be separated out from a narrower category of 'planning themes' and that narrative themes offer freedoms and flexibilities. In this regard, they provide a set of discursive themes that respond to the 2 'meta-themes' of London Growth and East London Deprivation, constructing these two meta-themes in particular ways according to context and in different ways at different times and making it possible to strike the balance of emphasis and priority between them in different ways. 'Places of Exchange' gives the balance a spatial emphasis, making it possible to conceive of a relationship between different communities, understood from the perspective of geography, the coming together of neighbourhoods and also in a broader sense of an intermingling in a shared public space. A Tear in Fabric speaks to the idea of connections, and the possibility of stitches being made in time. Stratford City/Metropolitan places the emphasis on London Growth, but suggests that growth of a place might occur in ways that address or respond to deprivation. Greening the Valley provides a setting for high value development and offers amenity for a deprived community; Water City extends the reach of the landscape theme and embraces more social ideas of restoration and life-giving. The Olympics/Olympic legacy fixes the Growth/Deprivation couplet at the centre of the Olympic project for the Lea Valley and makes legacy a national promise to east London. Convergence takes a hold of that promise and makes it work for the deprived boroughs: a promise that must be fulfilled. Olympicopolis and the knowledge economy are names for a story about a journey from shadow into light, as a vague sense of what the future culture and economy of the area starts to materialise, giving substance to the idea that London's centre is moving east.

10.3 The holistic form of narratives

Analysing the various stories from the perspective of their holistic form (Lieblich et al., 1998), it becomes evident that the main narrative is a romance, while the counter-narratives follow alternative trajectories, including comedy, tragedy and satire (Frye, 1957). Following the romance plot first, the heroes in our story (for there are many, not one) overcome lots of challenges on the journey but ultimately triumph by delivering the Olympic Games. This story sits behind the planning documents; it is the story waiting to be told when the authoritative text of the Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) is written. By contrast, there are other forms of

narrative among the minor stories and counter-narratives. Some of the early champions of urban regeneration as a 'bottom up' process tell a tale of loss and return: outsiders turn up and take control of delivering the Olympics; they do not appreciate the Lea Valley and are not committed to the urban regeneration aspirations that the Games are supposed to deliver; however, once the Games are over, leadership returns to local agencies and to some who have worked hard at sustaining their projects and interests over the long term. The plot structure is that of a comedy, with order eventually restored despite the many misunderstandings and confusions along the way. For some, the story is a tragedy: especially for those who experience the Games as a defeat. The heroes end up being defeated by the forces of evil and are forced to retreat from the stage. This is the narrative form for those counter-narratives that challenge the triumphalism of the Games and regeneration-as-romance tales. The form of tragedy fits with counter-narratives that account for local communities whose lives have worsened despite the promises of the Games: businesses and residents forced to leave the area, those who lost housing as the welfare benefit regimes changed and social housing provision declined. The same form of story is suited to the tales of those whose careers or work missions were dislocated in the organisational turmoil: the early champions of the Games who were ignored, marginalised and even lost jobs along the way; political leaders who lost power, authors of strategies who never got to convert their ideas into reality. Satire, with its use of strategies such as irony, exaggeration and ridicule, is a form of narrative adopted by some onlookers who seek to puncture the grand claims of Olympic legacy, subverting the dominant narrative by exposing its empty rhetoric. This narrative form is evident in some academic critiques (Cohen, 2013, 2017) and also in popular fora including some content on the Games Monitor website; and in popular discourse, such as the street art around Hackney Wick/Fish Island, where evidence can be found of the use of satire to subvert the Olympic brand.

10.4 A place with a past, present and future: an identity that shifts over time

The elements (place, agency, counter-narrative) in my story are constructed in an evolving setting of a place in time. The way we understand the Lower Lea shifts with reference to changing constructions of its past, present and future. Before 1992, the

Lea has a past as an area of former industrial glory, a present of degradation and a future of development opportunity. Between 2002 and 2007, a similar story is told of the past and the present, but different scenarios for the future are articulated, with 3 options: an Olympic option, a non-Olympic option and then, in embryo, a post-Olympic option. Although past and present remain similar, the authorship of time past and present shifts from the local to the regional, as the Mayor of London takes the reigns. Between 2007 and 2012, the traces of the past are erased on the Olympic land inside the blue security fence. The businesses and their histories, the remnants of old streets below and pylons above, the land uses and land forms and even the soil with its memories imprinted in the pollution of multiple chemicals, are all removed to make way for the Olympic Park. In the present, the Lower Lea is cleaved apart between the Olympic Park and the rest of the Valley. Time itself appears cleaved in the same way across the line of the Blue Fence, inside time accelerates towards the future, while the fringe areas change in slower and less directed ways; and at a further distance time, measured by property development, remains largely stagnant and uncertain. Between 2007 and 2012, the future for the Park is recast as 'Games-time' for 3 weeks in 2012 and then 'legacy' that stretches out beyond. Every month after summer 2012, the memory of the Games recedes and it becomes the defining moment of the Valley's past. The Lea Valley is the place that hosted the Games. It did have an industrial past, but those longer memories have been absorbed and into the stories the LLDC tells of itself. As Cohen (2017) points out, 'legacy' remains a defining framework insofar as the institutions and their imaginative and material constructions are focused on the Games and their aftermath. At some point, the overriding claims of the 2012 Olympics will recede and the Valley's developments will respond to other forces. But for now, the future of the Valley is the Legacy Vision. New possibilities open up by design and by serendipity, and, notably, the Legacy Communities Scheme, published in 2012, is overtaken by the Local Plan prepared in 2014. The latter communicating LLDC's sense of confidence as digital, media and cultural users commit to the Park and the residential development sites proceed faster than expected, but overall the structure of the Park has been set and the variations are in pace and intensity rather than direction. In these ways, narrative time shifts as we move between the four chronological time periods; we conceive of the Lower Lea Valley as a place in time in different ways in each period, by reference to changing stories of its past, present and future.

10.5 Counter-narratives and acts of agency

What bearing do 'agency' and 'counter-narrative' have on these changing stories of place? Counter-narratives give expression to tensions and contradictions that need to be resolved so that the 'authoritative text' for the Lower Lea can evolve or be recast in the change from one period to another. Moreover, acts of 'agency' by various characters in the process are expressed in choices between options, in acts of alignment or shifts in emphasis that chart a way towards the reformulation of the authoritative text.

Counter-narratives express different interpretations of reality, carrying with them differing priorities and opportunities. The Lower Lea Valley is the subject of multiple readings by different agencies and individuals, reflecting different institutional interests; these are expressed in multiple ways and among them there are thematic oppositions. The act of plan-making represents the conscious or ideological formulation of an authoritative text and so the process of developing the approved plan requires action to build singular perspectives, mediate choices and find resolution between oppositions. The acts of resolution between the oppositions of a particular time period are necessary to shift the story of the Lower Lea, the way it is framed in place and time, from one period to the next.

10.6 The exercise of agency over time

The exercise of agency: key actions between 1995 and 2002
Between 1995 and 2002, plans constructed the Lower Lea as a place of opportunity, proposing that east Tower Hamlets and west Newham could perform as part of urban London rather than as suburbia. These counter-narratives flew in the face of received wisdom. Leadership within the public sector at the regional level was deeply fractured between regional government in its infancy, with different interpretations of the task in hand. Agency was necessary, actions by local leaders of various kinds, to mount the campaign that would shift perceptions of the Lea Valley and to formulate an, albeit locally fractured, story around the Leaside/Arc of Opportunity. At this time, the Arc of Opportunity was a classic counter-narrative in that it starts out as a story of the

underdog who perseveres and succeeds despite the odds, against a master-narrative that the Lower Lea is too beset with problems to welcome development projects.

The exercise of agency: key actions between 2002 and 2007

From 2002 to 2007, the case for the Olympics is made and won. Multiple tensions and contradictions arise and are overcome, and the story set out in the British Olympic bid submission wins out on the international stage; that story proposes that the Lower Lea will host the Olympics and then be converted after 2012 into a successful 'piece of city'. Multiple narratives are woven into a meta-narrative that the London 2012 Games will deliver the regeneration of the Lea Valley and thereby a 'lasting legacy' for east London. Considerable skill is in evidence in the ways the authors plan to secure widespread endorsement and institutional backing. The OAPF, published in 2007, provides the planning policy framework necessary to support the planning decisions for the fast-evolving development schemes for the Park, including its stadia and infrastructure. The imperative to deliver the Games, led by the London Mayor with the senior backing of central government from the Prime Minister downwards, introduces an unprecedented discipline into decision-making processes about priorities in the Lea Valley.

Agency is clearly exercised by the Mayor of London and his advisors who lead from positions of power, creating agencies and making appointments, and brokering the relationship with central government such that London's regional government could remain in practical control. Equally, there are many wider acts of agency as players create and sustain positions of power and authority. The resolution of oppositions include the settling of internal conflicts driven by institutional cultures in the LDA; the singular drive to secure land assembly prioritised above other interventions, the creation of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) with power, resources and a mission to deliver the Olympic Park by 2012, overcoming the major contradiction between 'Olympic Park' and 'East London Regeneration'. These successful actions meant that by the end of 2007, the commitment to deliver the Olympic Park and prepare for the Games, was backed by national, regional and local government with considerable support of the wider public. Opposition was sufficiently contained such that it would or could not disrupt the project. Discussing the period in one forum, I commented that the 'tanks arrived in town' to deliver the Games, and a colleague

retorted that, for the first time ever in the Lea Valley, 'all the tanks were pointing in the same direction'. The resolution of oppositions by 2007 made it possible to move into the five-year development period up to Games-time with the Olympic narrative firmly settled and articulated as a component of the London city growth strategy.

The exercise of agency: key actions between 2007 and 2012

From 2007 onward, with the bid secure and the focus on delivering the Games championed from the highest levels of Government, the Mayor of London, acting through his Mayoral advisors, regional government and the dedicated Olympic delivery bodies, retained firm control of the 'authoritative text', while relentless progress was made towards the preparation of the stage and the mounting of the show. Counter-narratives in this period reflect and respond to the power of the dominant narrative. The Olympics and its legacy becomes a powerful bandwagon such that scores of agencies seek to write their pet projects into the story. We are told of east London boroughs 'dusting off all their old projects' and diverse groups London-wide suggesting their own schemes are essential to Games legacy, while programme managers discriminate and resist the pressure to absorb everything. Political leaders in Newham, having decided to drop an oppositional stance to the Mayor of London's Games proposals, publicly endorse the emerging mega-project but look for their own ways to engage, setting up ambitious volunteering and public engagement initiatives; they take leadership by scripting their relationship to the main event. The legacy agenda may be considered a 'counter-narrative' to the Olympics, though we have seen how it has been firmly scripted into the authoritative text. Legacy planning in this period is expressed in the creation of the Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) and subsequent LLDC, and in the development of the Host Boroughs 'Convergence' agenda. The inter-relationships between the Games, Legacy and Convergence narratives are closely managed from the political centre. We noted above how a number of players established a position in the project: British Waterways securing major works to its watercourses, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority winning the legacy ownership of the Velodrome and Loughborough University securing a London-base on the Park as part of legacy plans. Their stories run in parallel, sometimes progressing outside of the scope of the ODA's work to deliver the Olympic Park, sometimes becoming absorbed into it. A form of leadership is in evidence, outside, but striking a position in relation to, the centres of power for the

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Olympics. Their actions to promote various parallel initiatives are less important to the 3 weeks of the Games but become critical to the possibilities for the Park and the Lea Valley beyond 2012. If the requirement to deliver the Games on time and on budget puts planning on a war footing, then the counter-narratives within official circles take the form of minor skirmishes to establish positions concerned with the longer term and the wider regeneration agendas. The resolutions to these tensions, minor concerns in relation to the spectacle of London 2012, are critical in shaping the post-2012 world. Agency is overtly in the hands of the officials delivering the Games; covertly a number of actors position themselves as keepers of the long-term value: they reinterpret projects and seek footholds and leverage. The counter-narrative lens enables us to appreciate the texture of these unfolding programmes.

The exercise of agency: key actions 2012 to 2015

After 2012, as the Games recede into memory, the LLDC's influence comes into its own - as landowner, asset manager, development broker and planning authority. Now, the inevitable internal tensions, characteristic of a new agency, abound in the internal life of the LLDC around cultures and priorities of estate management, property development, urban design, event management, marketing and socio-economic regeneration. The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, replaced Mayor Livingstone in 2008 but largely sustained the same plan up to the 2012 Games. Now Johnson's hand is more evident in defining 'legacy', redirecting development around his 'Olympicopolis' vision. The distinction between 'park' and the wider area is built into the structure of the LLDC, given by the boundaries of its land ownership and planning powers and Legacy is enshrined in LLDC constitution and purpose.

10.7 Acts of agency and the (re)structured context for action

In each period, the structured context for action comprises a given set of institutional arrangements and, more broadly, a setting within which the actions of the period take place. Tensions and oppositions are expressed as counter-narratives within the multiplicity of stories told. Actions are taken to overcome challenges and settle contradictions; progressively they drive forward changes and bringing a new structured context for action into existence. The structured context for action moves through 4 periods. In the first period, the Lea Valley is a fragmented place, physically

and institutionally, and a place of hidden magic and opportunities. In the second, the Lea Valley is adopted by the Mayor of London and becomes the site of an Olympic dream until that dreamed of plan, it transpires, becomes a blueprint. In the third, the ODA, backed by the Mayor of London and the Treasury, takes over, driving the Olympic Park from blueprint to construction site to stage for the 2012 Games. In the fourth and final period, the LLDC becomes the defining structured context for action, with its powers, resources, its jurisdiction over a bounded portion of the Valley and with 'legacy' as its mission statement. Actions are taken to resolve the defining challenges of each period, and these usher in the structures that form the setting for the next one. The studies of the narratives told illuminate the dynamics of these processes.

10.8 Stocks of knowledge

There are continuities between the 4 periods; institutional cultures are expressed formally in texts and grounded in professional/cultural norms, and practices that become transferred as memories between one period and the next. These memories include strategic ambitions based on particular interpretations of the Lea Valley and its prospects for change; they include principles and values about intentions sitting behind policy documents. Institutional memories are held by groups of individuals who bring them to life in successive periods. These individuals succeed in their efforts to find new positions or hang on to their roles despite the constant restructuring associated with institutional change. They re-emerge as actors in successive periods and act as the keepers of strategic memories and values. The narrative lens I have adopted in this study draws attention to ways in which communication is constitutive within the organisations and the structures I have studied (Kuhn, 2017). Numerous examples might be drawn out from the texts to illustrate how 'stocks of knowledge' (Schutz, 1932) are carried from one period to the next. The concepts 'Water City' and 'Arc of Opportunity' from 1995 to 2002 are meaningful; they inform the work on the OAPF between 2002 and 2007 but are somewhat marginalised. Yet by 2015, some individuals who formulated those early ideas hold senior positions at executive and board level in the LLDC and the 'Water City' concept is, for them, a reference point, even though it does not feature in the text of the Local Plan. Design ideas such as those expressed in the metaphor of 'mending the tear in the fabric/stitching the

fringe', and 'places of exchange' resonate across time and constantly reappear, as a consequence of stubborn insistence of a very small group of influential urban designers. Gillian Evans' book 'London's Olympic Legacy: The Inside Track' (2016) gives an eloquent account of how a group of committed officers champion the idea of socio-economic legacy, offering resistance and providing continuity within organisational turmoil. Finally, the idea that it was the Lea Valley and not just the Olympic Park that offered the opportunity to accommodate London growth is an institutional memory that re-emerges in the aftermath of the Games, carried forward from the past by a small number of survivors. Newcomers to the professional world of the Lower Lea arrive in a context in which the 'urban mentality' (Plesske, 2014), informal and assumed ideas about the Lea Valley, have decisively shifted. I now turn to consider these changed meanings attached to place.

10.9 Urban mentality

In her study of contemporary London fiction in the era of the Blair Government, Nora Plesske (2014) analyses ways in which authors render London intelligible. London's legibility is achieved, she argues through a 'mentality', which 'connects space, everyday practice and the imaginary' (Plesske, 2014, p.528). Plesske distinguishes between features that might be considered generic to metropolitan cities anywhere, and a number of idiosyncratic characteristics that are specific to London. Adapting and applying similar categories, we can ask in conclusion to this analysis: what 'urban generic' and 'London specific' mentalities, imaginative frames of mind, are attached to the Lea Valley? Has the Lea Valley achieved the planners' ambitions for a 'new piece of city' … 'stitched into the urban fabric'? If so, has the Lea Valley become a place with generic features of the world city, or does it have London-specific characteristics?

Right back in 1857, Charles Dickens painted a grim picture of the territories east of the Lea in his essay 'Londoners Over the Border', which he described as 'a place of refuge for offensive trade establishments turned out of town'. As noted above, officials used the same rhetoric to reinforce the case for regeneration and development. We have noted how the Lea Valley in its pre-Olympic condition was frequently associated with crime, filth and pollution. Though other narratives

countered with evidence that this was a busy place of industry, housing, shopping and culture (Davies, Davis & Rapp, 2017), the dystopian imaginary was a popular perception in official circles even it was something of a caricature. Psychogeographers (Sinclair, 2011; Rogers, 2013) bemoan the loss of the Valley's liminal qualities to the Olympics: a lost, forgotten, hidden, incidental 'other' place fast being erased. Variously eulogised or reviled, the 'threatened' Lea Valley was made intelligible through Victorian Gothic tropes: secret, supernatural and alarming in a gloomy urban setting. The liminal qualities of the Lea Valley are erased by the development of the Olympic Park, though traces remain in isolated plots and hidden corners beyond the Park. In this way, a sub-region with qualities of urban fringe has been over-written in the fashion of a palimpsest.

Today, the development platforms of the Park, Westfield and Stratford are being developed out at a pace unforeseen by the planners, mostly for residential developments at a variety of scales. Investors' appetites for high-rise apartments are occasionally offset by a small portion of plan-led schemes with echoes of Georgian and Victorian London's scales and forms, though these references are not defining compared to the overall form of new development. Although scheme needs time to mature, the over-riding look and feel of the Park is that of an international style arriving in east London. In this sense, the Park's neighbourhoods are urban generic rather than London specific; more European than London in identity. By contrast, our respondents' narratives describe how the landscape qualities of the public realm work in an opposite direction; they build on the riverine valley to construct a sense of wild-space, in the fashion of Capability Brown in the north, while the event spaces and playgrounds of the south invite references to the Victorian promenades. The landscape setting for development brings the London urbanism of the Great Estates and Royal Parks to east London. In these ways, the overall built form of the new development is urban generic in quality and style, while the public realm is arguably more urban specific, bringing a London landscape vernacular to east London.

A similar tension is discernible if we consider the changed uses of the territory being created. Planners set out to bring activities and uses associated with central London out here to the east: higher education research and teaching, innovative businesses in knowledge-rich sectors and some of the best sports facilities in the UK. Stories of

triumph recorded above speak of a level of ambition that has won out in the ways plans have been realised. East London is arguably absorbing 'urban general' qualities through the enlargement of London's central activities towards the east. Whether these uses are transforming the social life of east Londoners is hotly contested, as we noted in the chapter on Games Legacy above. Social inequality is reproduced here in east London in line with the wider restructuring of London's economy. However, it is indisputable that some east Londoners *are* moving into some of the new housing. It is moving to see local people of all ages using the stunning Aquatics Centre. The parkland and its play areas are being used by local people. The bridge from Stratford Old Town is constantly busy with pedestrian traffic bringing local people into the new Westfield Shopping Centre. While the centre is an archetypal privately managed and regulated space (Minton, 2012, 2017), it is plain to see that its bars, restaurants, malls and shops are alive with east Londoners. Changes such as these are claimed, with justification in my view, as victories by the promoters of the early visions for the Park: we dreamed it, said one respondent. My research has shown how these dreams were weaved and embedded in the cultural life of a community of decision makers in narrative forms, performing as stocks of knowledge in the process of change. To note the processes at play here is not to give ground to the official version of events and to deny more critical assessments of the sustained inequalities in the life of the city. Rather it is an account and analysis of the ways in which thinking about the Lea Valley evolved within official circles.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Summary contribution to knowledge

Ritchie et al. (2014) discuss the functions of qualitative research. Here, I have applied their classification to my own research and summarised my contribution to knowledge.

Contextual knowledge

I construct an ethnographic account based on an interpretation of data taken from accounts of people who played leading roles in the official world. I provide a fine grained account of the the processes at play in the development of the 'official stories' within a loose, dialogic culture of the official community I studied. The plans for the Lower Lea, I argue, establish narrative themes in the course of constructing particular versions of past, present and future of the Valley. While plans are not structured in the form of stories, they draw upon and generate narrative resources that create possibilities for storytelling. My research contributes insight into the official world of planning and regeneration in the Lea Valley before and after the success of the Olympic bid. I demonstrate that the official world was not monolithic in terms of its outlook; rather it is a dynamic environment characterised by the interplay of polyphonic narratives. I find that 'embedded' cultures of traditions, practices and meanings can be found inside officialdom, and that this world can be contradictory, complex and polyphonic. I set out in narrative form an interpretation of planning and regeneration decisions made and actions taken. I show that that the changing context can be sub-divided over four time periods, and I argue that specific tensions and contradictions were resolved in each period, thereby creating the context for the forthcoming period.

Explanatory knowledge

My research has suggested that the *concentration of spatial planning and urban regeneration activity* is one defining characteristic of the locale of the Lower Lea.

Narrative themes are looser than planning policies and perform a distinctive role in the dialogic world of planning officials. Narratives are a medium through which the interplay of multiple ideas and meanings occurs, expressing contestation and the resolution of tensions; challenges must be overcome to create 'official' positions and policies. Within the polyphony of narratives at play, authoritative texts in the form of narrative themes emerge. Narrative themes, understood as authoritative texts, embody meanings that can be shared among the official community, acting as memories and strategic resources carried forward over time.

Using the concept of urban mentality, I argue that the developments on the Park are creating an 'urban generic' language through the built form: a place that could be a part of any contemporary world city; by contrast I argue that the landscape strategy builds and communicates 'London specific' qualities, with narrative echoes of central London's Great Estates.

Evaluative knowledge

The tools of narrative analysis were useful in my research for untangling the strands of legacy from that which it overlaid: this tool can be applied in similar contexts. I propose that narrative analysis is a useful tool for revealing and examining the dynamic processes at play inside the institutional worlds of policy making. Sensitivity to the processes at play in this sphere contributes to better understanding of an important dimension of the activity of planning.

Generative knowledge

Policy

I make a distinction between narrative themes and planning policies and argue both can have force as 'authoritative texts'. It follows that narrative themes can be deployed to influence planning and development in different ways from planning policies. My research reinforces a case for more planning professionals to develop skills as rhetoricians and as narrative analysts to influence, shape and use the flow of narratives.

Theoretical knowledge

My research does not contribute new theory, but adds to the body of case studies that demonstrate the value of narrative analysis generally, and the use of the counter-narrative lens specifically, to analyse the practice of planning as the evolution of policy inside the world of officials. My research also adds to research which evidences the usefulness of Giddens' concept of structuration as a sensitising tool for analysing the interplay of structure and agency. I demonstrate how the actions of planners and officials in resolving oppositions and tensions could be seen to recreate the structured context for action.

I argue that the borders and crossings of the Lea Valley have the quality of a chronotope in that they embody space-time. Plans establish zones; in the Lea Valley, places embody time. Stories set in place and time intrude upon and engage with the social qualities of their implementation of planning designations and regeneration interventions.

11.2 Discussion of contribution to knowledge

Planning theorists like Patsy Healey and Leonie Sandercock advocate for the greater use of narrative methods in planning practice. My research responds to calls made by these and other planning theorists and academics for further case studies and theoretical explorations that adopt the narrative lens in studies of planning (Sandercock, 2003; Van Hulst, 2012; Walter, 2013). Mareile Walter, for example, calls for studies that look at 'how narratives in municipal land-use planning construct social communities' (Walter, 2013, p. 5). Sandercock (2003) notes that stories perform roles for planners, though not necessarily consciously. There is an understandable tendency to focus on applications of narrative methods to the challenges of securing effective communication between the official world of government and the wider spheres of the public and non-government stakeholders in the planning process. My intention in this research has been to build on the theoretical and normative outlook advocated by Healey, Sandercock and others, but to focus specifically on the internal life of a policy and decision-making community. I believe I have demonstrated that narrative analysis is a useful tool for revealing and

examining the dynamic processes at play inside the institutional worlds of policy making. Developing sensitivity to the processes at play in this sphere contributes to better understanding of an important dimension of the activity of planning.

While there is now a large volume of research and analysis of Olympic legacy, reviewed in Chapter 3, there are a limited number of published pieces of research that draw on insider knowledge of policy communities. My research contributes to the description and interpretation of that world. My contribution to the body of Olympic legacy analysis is one that avoids the inherent danger of treating the official narrative as monolithic. I also make a distinctive contribution to Games legacy analysis by starting my account in the 'pre-history' of Lea Valley before the Games, and by addressing the ways in which the Olympics distorted the institutional world of planning and regeneration, rather than treating the Olympics as ground zero and making the Olympics the story. In my account, the Olympics is a chapter in the story of the Lower Lea. The uses of the tools of narrative analysis are useful for untangling the strands of legacy from that which it overlaid.

My own work runs the risk of being perceived as not sufficiently critical of the official claims to legacy. This risk arises because of my past professional affiliations to the official project and my personal affiliations to the people I interviewed. Moreover, by seeking to 'give voice' to the officials engaged in the process, there is a tendency to do so in a way that is sympathetic to their outlook. In my methodological statement I made it clear that I was offering an interpretation and did not claim objectivity. In my view, much critical writing about the Olympics is itself value laden and interpretive: claims that the Olympics never delivered the legacy promise stand up well in relation to the hyperbole of the legacy promises made by the government; there are legitimate arguments to be had over the abject failure of government at all levels to solve the housing and benefits crisis, all of which have worsened in the face of economic slowdown post 2008 and the public sector austerity measures. But critics appear mealy mouthed and miserable from the perspective of the thousands of people paying modest admission fees to enter the Aquatics Centre or simply wandering in the new parkland for free. Balance is necessary.

However, I defend the integrity of my work in a number of other ways. Firstly, I did not set out to conduct an appraisal of the Olympics in relation to the performance measures linked to legacy. Rather, my distinctive contribution lies in the close attention I pay to the processes at play in the development of the 'official stories'. In this regard, I suggest the criteria for evaluating the success of my study should be on the basis of criteria relevant to narrative inquiry methodology. In this spirit, criteria include: my insight into the context and the characters involved; the extent to which my account of events and experiences that carries verisimilitude; whether I capture and communicate people's accounts in a way that evokes empathy; my ability to gather events from a sufficient pool of informants so that the story is accurate in the sense of being sufficiently comprehensive; and the extent to which my structure is sufficient to make my account legible (Lieblich, Tuval-Maschiac & Zilber, 2017).

My starting point, set out in the introduction to my thesis, was an interest in the inter-relationship between large-scale development projects and fringe conditions and the management of the relationship between what is loosely referred to as 'top-down' and 'bottom up' planning. My perspective presupposed that different cultures would be at play in what I assumed would be a 'command and control' culture at the heart of the institutions leading the regeneration process. What I discovered was actually a looser, dialogic culture at play inside the community I have studied. Although the play of power is very evident, the narrative lens has been invaluable in helping me tease out and understand the ways in which firm policy positions and institutional structures evolved. I trust I have demonstrated that sensitivity to counter-narratives and more generally the interplay of multiple narratives is helpful in understanding the development of meanings in the official world over the time of the study.

I set out to answer the question: How do place narratives shape processes of spatial planning and regeneration in the neighbourhoods in and around the former Olympic Park in east London? My study has explored this question by following two lines of inquiry. Firstly, I analysed planning documents, and identified a number of narrative themes that are variously drawn upon, established or modified in those plans. Secondly, I explored narratives with reference to the ways the ideas in the plans are discussed, communicated and acted upon within the community of public officials involved in plan-making and implementing programmes. My selective approach

narrowed down the scope of my research and made it achievable; however, I excluded wider questions of the relationship between the narrativity of plans and their relationship to narratives in wider public discourse. My focus, though limited is, I propose, insightful and therefore valid. The plans for the Lower Lea, I argue, establish narrative themes in the course of constructing particular versions of past, present and future of the Valley. While plans are not structured in the form of stories, they draw upon and generate narrative resources that create possibilities for story-telling. With a plan in front of us, we are bound to ask: what happens next? The narrative possibilities given by plans come into their own in the discursive worlds of policy-makers and officials involved in public sector regeneration; here numerous stories circulate. In this sphere, there are diverse cultures, values and perspectives at play, and decisions must be made for policies to be codified in adopted plans. The narrative lens is well suited to analysing the processes through which policies evolve, and the associated contestation between multiple and often competing narratives. Plans give singular, simple expression to complex sets of ideas. Achieving resolution does involve public dialogue and a good plan will demonstrate a high degree of consensus with views of the wider public. However, public bodies must secure singularity of purpose internally as a precondition of being able to engage in meaningful dialogue with the wider public. My research explores the relevant processes at play in the case of the Lea Valley.

My research is concerned with place. I have taken 'place' to mean a bounded territory in which there is a concentration of interaction; in other words I have used place to convey a sense of the concentration of particular kinds of social activity, using place in the same sense that Giddens uses the term locale. At risk of making a circular argument, my research has addressed the *concentration of spatial planning and urban regeneration activity* as a defining characteristic of the locale of the Lower Lea. Clearly, there are many social worlds attached to this place, but my research has explored the social world of the officials who set out to make and implement regeneration plans. The Lower Lea as a place, or locale, is associated with the concentration of spatial planning and urban regeneration, and linked meanings have been promulgated and adopted by officials. Increasingly these meanings, generated in the sphere of the internal institutional life of public bodies, have informed and then infused the more popular and public ideas associated with the Lea Valley.

How does narrative perform in this insider world of planning and urban regeneration? I answered this question one way by categorising narrative themes concerned with place, identifiable in the data, and analysing the different ways those narrative themes perform over time and in relation to each other. I identified multiple narrative themes that are constructed and deployed in planning documents that were written for the Lea Valley in the study period. I grouped the themes within a hierarchical framework that separated out the different ways the themes performed. Two meta-themes ('London Growth' and 'East London Deprivation') are ever present in the strategies. These meta themes are given different emphases in the plans over time; they interact, complement or diverge depending on the political and institutional outlooks of plan-makers, leaders and agencies in different periods. Below these meta-themes, sit planning policies. They too can be grouped thematically and categorized in ways that link them to the context in which they were produced. Planning policies offer interpretations of the meta-themes, making them concrete and establishing a particular emphasis, interaction and application. These second tier themes are crystalised as policies, and embedded in plans. Below planning themes, I identified a layer of 11 narrative themes. Conceptually, I indicate that these 'third tier' themes work in more informal ways. They capture shared ideas and meanings in the discursive exchanges in the world of the officials, and are expressed in non-statutory texts such as design documents and vision statements. Narrative themes, as they perform in the context of the internal culture of officials, are highly malleable, unlike themes that have crystalised in statutory plans. Thus they develop, interact, evolve, adapt and change in response to material circumstances and political priorities. The informality of narrative themes gives them a flexibility and adaptability suited to changing circumstances, and they are sensitive indicators of the lifeworld of the communities within which they circulate. There is vivacity in the allegiances formed and creativity at play in the work to champion such 'third tier' thematic outlooks. My analysis in Chapters 6-9 captures some of the passion and commitment at play, in attachments to particular narrative themes. A world of conversation, contestation, exchange and resolution exists prior to and beyond the approved policy documents.

My research illustrates how narratives provide the fuel or the active ingredient in the development and sharing of ideas within the policy community I studied. Plans

express the agency of their authors. For example, the authors of plans created a sense of scale and quality of opportunity in Newham, set values that connected entrepreneurship and community improvement in Tower Hamlets. The ambition of the Mayor of London to bring his strategic influence to bear on changing conditions in east London was given force in the development of the Lower Lea OAPF. In all these senses, the *narrativity* of plans is material to their success in mobilising subsequent actions. The narrativity of plans fosters their use in ways that reach beyond their necessary and essential core function in setting the policy framework for the determination of planning applications. The plans then, are expressions of agency, but their texts and imagery represent the structured context for action: they form the context for the next round of actions. Plans are policy frameworks, and more broadly linked narratives communicate specific forms and meanings. The formal policies of the plans create legally enforceable obligations; narratives operate in more informal ways but they are nontheless structures capturing social meanings that shape the context for actions. This point is illustrated by the passage in Chapter 9 where the urban designer describes how she uses the themes from the OAPF as a communication tool in her negotiations with developers. She carries authority as an important official, even though she seeks to influence the shape of developments in ways that proceed outside of formal planning decisions processes.

While policies are necessarily precise and formal, we see that narrative themes can operate in more informal ways. Policies need to be precise: they form the basis for regulating development and setting obligations on developers that can be defended legally if necessary. By contrast, narrative themes invite interpretation. They offer a softer, looser way of influencing future development. They work by making graphic and evoking ideas of what is intended. Narrative themes are discursive; they provide communicative tools through which ideas can be shared, played with and reproduced in different contexts. They mediate the meta-themes, giving them local and specific expression in place and in time. In Chapters 6 to 9, I demonstrate how themes that appeared in planning documents are reformulated and activated in my discussions with managers and decision makers. The specificity of planning policies shapes the development capacity of a plot and regulates the form of development; equally competence in the sphere of communication, the manipulation and use of narrative themes, is necessary if they too form part of the wider structural context for

development. Planners need to be confident, competent communicators. The persuasiveness of narrative, its rhetorical force, is important in a world in which ideas are continuously reshaped and evolve and inform major implementation decisions in multiple ways, including but not restricted to their expression in planning policies.

Planning documents are tested by the UK Planning Inspectorate for their soundness, measured against the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. Soundness is tested against numerous requirements: for consultation in developing the plan, the transparent consideration of options and so on. These obligations influence heavily the culture and values of the planning profession. My research adds to the voices that emphasise the dialogic qualities of planning and implies that the planning profession benefits from the development of relevant skills and good practice. My experience in professional practice and my engagement with some people in this research tells me that there are indeed planners who are good storytellers; my research suggests that it is good to develop skills, awareness and competence in narrative strategies by planners not only to support the dialogue with the public, but also to strengthen the internal dialogues through which plans evolve. Planners are called upon, in the internal life of official institutions, to use narratives to explain and persuade. My thesis might be read in short as a call for more planners to become skilled rhetoricians and for such skills to be more widely learned and encouraged.

Narratives in plans develop, interact, evolve and are given different force at different times and in different contexts. The theme of Water City, for example, provides a link between the earlier plans of the Arc of Opportunity and the Leaside Vision and the later plan of the GLA's Lower Lea OAPF. The narrative theme forms a link between the documents. A core theme from the earlier period is revisited as a memory. The use of terminology and values from the earlier period lends weight to the perception that the earlier plans, embodying the ideas and ambitions of their authors, were noted, valued and their messages taken on board and carried into the future. Conversely, the failure to adopt messages and carry them forward can work as a snub, an exertion of power, or a way of marginalising people and agencies who are characterised off-message by the authorities in a given period.

My work highlights the ways in which spatial thinking about the Lea Valley is constructed and expressed narratively in 'authoritative texts'. Authoritative texts (Rasmussen, 2017) are examples of 'stocks of knowledge' available to professional and political communities. The value of the concept 'authoritative text' for the present purpose lies in the possibilities for their promiscuous application, whether as narratives in statutory plans, informal documents or just in ideas expressed in conversation. Plans might be understood as the formal capture and codification of authoritative texts. However, a narrow focus on adopted plans would miss the dynamic and lively world of narrative interactions within a wider pool of ideas.

To understand how different interests within and across agencies working in partnership bind together and establish shared and agreed purposes, we need to understand how values and cultures attached to a place are held, how they circulate and how they are articulated. Plans codify 'background ideational abilities' (Schmidt, 2008) within organisations, but they do not constitute the entirety of the process of codification. Narrative, a form of discourse, is a feature of the ongoing dialogic processes through which the shared ideas, expressed in the plans, are developed. My research, drawing on Bakhtin's concept of the polyphonic narrative, draws out how plans are the product of the interaction of multiple voices. Chapters 6 to 9 tell a story of the ways these many voices and ideas interact in ways that give rise to authoritative texts. Narrative analysis is able to capture these processes, and as such is a relevant tool for studying the internal life of policy communities and official agencies.

Patsy Healey adopts the normative position that planners should commit to building the 'institutional capacity' of a place, understood in a cultural sense. My research contributes to thinking about the ways in which institutional cultures develop by reporting on the cultures, reflected in narratives, inside the official agencies involved in the governance of the Lea Valley. We find that 'embedded' cultures of traditions, practices and meanings can be found inside officialdom, and that this world can be contradictory, complex and polyphonic. The narrative lens offers sensitivity to such complexity. I have emphasised inter-subjective interactions within this world, in contrast to studies that focus on work to build consensus or mask conflict and power play between authorities and the wider public.

As an analytic device, I told my story by sub-dividing the arc of the plot across four narrative time periods. This enabled me to separate out conceptually the various tensions and contradictions that needed to be resolved in a given period or episode, and to tell stories of the actions of individuals and groups to make choices and to determine how problems would be overcome. I described *stories of place* by reference to the institutional cultures and agency arrangements in the beginning of each episode and discussed how they had changed at the end of the period. In this way, I have used the concept of place here in the way Giddens deploys the term 'locale'. My analysis was concerned with the construction of place, understood as a *structure*, or a set of cultural and institutional properties and arrangements. Each episode in Chapters 6 to 9 moves in this way:

1.	Place (structured context for action)
2.	Counter-narratives at play, expressing tensions and thematic oppositions linked to place meanings
3.	Agency: actions to resolve tensions and oppositions; narrative resolution
4.	[Changed] place (structured context for action).

The structure of my story involves an abstraction which separates out the steps 1 to 4 in the dynamic development of plan-making. This makes it possible to present 'structure' and 'agency' separately as moments in the movement of narrative time. However, if we understand this separation as a heuristic device, we can appreciate that the elements are actually moments within a totality. In this way, I believe I have constructed a narrative, and thereby provided a syntagmatic analysis, which demonstrates the principle of Giddens' structuration theory – namely of 'the way in which social activities regularly reconstitute the circumstances that gave rise to them in the first place', or in Patsy Healey's words 'the continuously reshaped product of social processes through which systems of meaning and thought are generated'. In this way, Giddens' concept of reflexivity helps explain how, in the course of making plans for the future of the Lower Lea Valley, actors not only make choices that are

framed by the circumstances of the social context (the economic, social and political reality of the time) but also *actively reproduce and generate* structure in the course of making the plans.

By constructing the story as a polyphony, I have used a structural narrative form to describe how knowledge was negotiated and shared inter-subjectively as the plans for the Lea Valley evolved, and how politics and power play a part in the development of those plans. Following Healey's normative position, the implication is that planners, is they are to intervene successfully in such processes, must develop skills in 'inclusionary argumentation' (Healey, 2007, p.253). As my work on the research developed, it became clearer to me that I had to change my initial focus on the narrativity of plans. I started off imagining that my interviews would help me flesh out my understanding of the contents of the plans. For all the reasons outlined above I ended up putting much greater emphasis on what I was learning about the informal sphere of talk of plans.

Kuhn (2017, p23) discusses how we might secure insights into institutional processes by working with 'the moments of potential counter-narrative influence can provide unique insight[s]' In taking up this challenge, I found myself reflecting on the narrative structures of the stories being told, and concluding that the main narrative is a romance, while the counter-narratives follow alternative trajectories, including comedy, tragedy and satire. Following the romance plot first, the heroes in our story (for there are many, not one) overcome lots of challenges on the journey but ultimately triumph by delivering the Olympic Games. This story sits behind the planning documents; it is the story waiting to be told when the authoritative text of the OAPF is written. By contrast, there are other forms of narrative among the minor stories and counter-narratives. For those who lose their jobs or influence over time, the story told takes the form of tragedy. Some fear the arrival of the Olympics means the eradication of long held values. Some characters in my story manage to win out in the end, despite apparently have lost power and authority along the way. Their story takes the form of a comedy. Critics of the Olympic project and its legacy narrative set out to puncture official hyperbole; satire is a tool in their critical armoury. Structural analysis of narratives can reveal the diversity of the counter-narratives at play, reinforcing the arguments of Sanne Frandsen, Timothy Kuhn and Marianne Wolff

(2017) that a focus on counter-narratives provides an insightful conceptual framework for analysing organisational cultures.

Finally, I note that a narrative time has been established in the unfolding story of the redevelopment of the Lea Valley. I discussed above how this takes a spatial form, in the sense that zones of core, periphery (fringe) and unchanged areas have been recast. My data shows how these zones have discernible social qualities: they are locales in Giddens' terminology; borders and crossings have the quality of a chromosome in that they embody space-time. Moving into the Park from the outlying areas can be experienced as travelling forward in time, if the new development of the Park is read as a story of triumphal future. Equally, the story of tragedy is told by those who would walk from the Park to an unfolding future in the older, established neighbourhoods were social conditions are stagnant or in decline. Plans establish zones; stories intrude upon and engage with the social qualities of their implementation in place and time.

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gentrification of east London. *City 17*(1), 99-118.

APPENDIX 1: PLANS SELECTED FOR ANALYSIS

Stage	Nature of the period	Plans selected for analysis
Stage 1 1995 – 2002	There is no over-arching plan for the Lower Lea. Local authorities and regeneration agencies make plans for parts of the Lea, reflecting the division of the LLV by borough boundaries.	Newham Arc of Opportunity [The Arc] - 2 documents: (Planning Framework, 1998; LLV: Stratford to Thameside Planning Framework, 2002) Leaside Framework and Vision [Leaside Framework]
Stage 2 2002 – 2007	The GLA is established and develops a unified approach to the Lea Valley in the London Plan; the Mayor agrees to make a bid for the Olympics and the bid wins.	Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework
Stage 3 2007 – 2012	A number of local and scheme specific plans and proposals are developed in response to the reality of the Games, and to the GLA's published planning policy for the wider Lower Lea.	Convergence Action Plan Leaside Area Action Plan Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan
Stage 4 2012 - 2014	'Legacy' Plans are written, addressing the future of the Olympic Park and surrounding neighbourhoods after the Games.	Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Guidance Stitching the Fringe Local Plan

APPENDIX 2: NARRATIVE THEMES IN PLANS

Stratford City/Stratford Metropolitan

A core theme shared by all the plans is that Stratford may grow as a location and become a major centre of London and a place of European significance. In the early plans, the term 'Stratford City' refers to the development scheme proposed for Stratford Rail Lands, while the 2011 'Stratford Metropolitan' plan builds on the idea that Stratford will assume a scale and quality that will allow it to be designated as a metropolitan centre in the hierarchy of London centres.

Water City and the Lea Valley as a linear park

'Water City' was conceived as a brand proposition in the 1980s by Reg Ward, the first Chief Executive of LDDC. He suggested that east London's riverine qualities offered a unique and defining landscape quality for the docklands developments and created the Water City brand to capture the idea. Its first application as a concept for the Lower Lea is as a core theme in the Newham Arc of Opportunity, Lower Lea Framework; and it was echoed in the Leaside Framework for the Tower Hamlets side of the Lea Valley. Social entrepreneur Andrew Mawson was an early advocate of the Water City concept as an over-arching strategy for the Lea Valley and East London, and in 2006 he formally launched the Water City initiative for East London with Richard Rogers,[4] aiming to revitalise the neglected waterways of East London, making use of their potential as transport links and more broadly envisaging a regeneration strategy linked to the metaphor of the life-giving qualities of water. Now Baron Mawson, Andrew and his partners continued to promote the strategy for over two decades since that time. The concept was taken up by masterplanners EDAW for the 2005 London submission to the IOC, and then in the GLA's 2007 Lower Lea OAPF.

Also, in 2007, Tower Hamlets published the Leaside Area Action Plan, and this makes various propositions linked to Water City: 'Supporting the Mayor's vision[10] for the creation of a water city which will see Leaside become the Venice of the East'.

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[10] A reference to the Mayor of London and to the vision contained in the Lower Lea Opportunity Area Planning Framework, produced in 2007, the same year as the Leaside Area Action Plan.

The 2012 OLSPG and the 2014 LLDC Local Plan drop the references to Water City altogether, while sustaining the commitment to the theme of the unique qualities of the Valley given by water: 'Create a new part of London built around the Lea Valley's unique network of waterways and open spaces' (GLA, 2012a) and in the Local Plan: 'The unique interplay of green spaces, waterways and built environment shape and unify the diverse places that make up the Legacy Corporation area' (LLDC, 2014).

Tear in the Fabric

I recollect that the metaphor of Lower Lea Valley representing a 'Tear in London's Urban Fabric' was frequently used by EDAW masterplanners in their consultation meetings during the development of the 2005 masterplan to accompany London's bid to host the Olympic Games. It gives local expression to a ubiquitous urban design concept of an urban fabric, referring to the physical form of a place. Newham Arc advocates 'an urban itinerary that merges with the existing fabric, in order to form a new metropolitan area of London-wide significance'. The 2007 OAPF promotes a vision for a 'mixed use city district, fully integrated into London's existing urban fabric'. The metaphor is extended to propose that 'existing areas of [Metropolitan open land] are stitched into the urban fabric'. The borough-led 2009 SRF warns of a risk that 'the new development areas are currently holes in our urban fabric and risk remaining separate unless we ensure that local places have access to the Olympic Park'. The Leaside AAP also envisages a place that is 'integrated into the urban fabric of London' (LB Tower Hamlets, 2007).

However, it is not until 2012 that the concept of a 'tear in the fabric' appears explicitly in policy documents, rather than in design charrettes, debates inside local authorities, presentations and public meetings. The 2012 OLSPG vision is for a place that has left behind a past and is no longer 'cut off from surrounding communities and a tear in the city's urban fabric'. The GLA's urban designers make clear the design thinking that lies behind these claims in their 2013 document 'Stitching the Fringe', a manifesto for an urban design-led strategy to repair the Lea Valley, makes the scar graphic: 'The tear in London's fabric: a tangled belt of canals and railways, parkland and industry, the 1,500 acre swathe of the Lower Lea Valley has always acted as a vast gulf, severing London's eastern areas from the city'. The 2014 Local Plan makes

negligible use of the metaphor, apart from proposing that new buildings in one area be 'weaved' into the historic fabric.

Stitching the Fringe

If the Lower Lea is a Tear in the Fabric, then the remedy proposed by (DfL) in 2013 is 'Stitching the Fringe'. This theme identifies a group of neighbourhoods at the edge of the Olympic Park and constructs them into the composite 'Olympic Fringe', thereby attributing an identity to Stratford, Leyton, Hackney Marsh, Hackney Wick/Fish Island and Bromley-by-Bow that is rooted in the perspective that puts the Park at the heart of the local geography. This is an inversion of a historical reality in which the Lower Lea Valley was the fringe in many senses: historically it was the border of London and for many recent decades, as described by Mayor of London, the Valley was a place on the margins.

Existing communities and convergence

So far, I have illustrated the Growth/Deprivation couplet with reference to examples that logically emphasise growth as the primary element of the binary. On July 6th, 2005 the formulation of the Lower Lea strategy in this way reached a crescendo with the announcement that London had won the bid to host the 2012 Games. The bid, a pitch for development, is predicated on the idea of legacy. Legacy - a promise for the future - is written into the project that is now a commitment backed by national government.

The local authorities around the forthcoming Olympic Park gear up to meet this challenge and, arguably for the first time, the Growth/Deprivation binary is reposed by agencies whose primary concern is to overcome deprivation. A myriad of borough-led initiatives were planned and delivered, and their ambitions are crystallized in the SRF of 2009 and the Convergence Action Plan of 2011. They are organised around the core statement in the Olympic Bid: that hosting the Games will deliver a lasting legacy benefit for surrounding communities. The Olympic legacy SRF was published in 2009 with the ambitious commitment to secure Convergence with the socio/economic conditions enjoyed by other Londoners within twenty years. As the introduction to the Convergence Action Plan explains:

The original commitment to this has its origins in the UK's London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Bid's stated ambition to secure from the hosting of the 2012 Games a lasting legacy benefit for the surrounding communities (Host Boroughs & GLA, 2011).

Convergence is the name for a vision that: 'Within 20 years the communities who host the Olympic Games will have the same social and economic chances as their neighbours across London' (Host Boroughs & GLA, 2011).

Places of Exchange

The 2007 GLA OAPF introduces the concept of 'Places of Exchange'. This theme, like Water City, is a malleable narrative concept, able to speak to a number of different agendas. In the OAPF, 'places of exchange' carries a literal meaning in planning terms and is used as a way to denote town centres, linked to a wider conception of the spatial distribution and hierarchy of functions distributed across the area:

> This hierarchy of town and local centres should be developed through the strengthening of existing centres and creation of new centres where these are in an accessible location (i.e. close to transport interchanges) and will provide services and amenities for both new and existing communities, linking these together to become 'Places of Exchange'. This concept of 'Places of Exchange' builds on the notion of developing clusters of community facilities, where flexible space and shared facilities can be provided to meet demand and the needs of service providers. It is likely that one key service or facility will provide the 'anchor' around which complementary retail, leisure, education, health and other community facilities will cluster (GLA, 2007, p.13).

'Places of Exchange' can be read in a reasonably literal sense as a concept for places in which the extension of community facilities, schools, nurseries, community centres, blue light services and private facilities like shops, restaurants and personal services, might all meet the current deficit in provision for existing communities as well as respond to population growth. Clearly the OAPF, in proposing the development of 40,000 new homes and 50,000 new jobs, new sporting facilities, park space and a network of connections into and across the Valley in the heart of some of London's most deprived neighbourhoods, is geared towards unlocking exceptional assets that can benefit existing communities. The Executive Summary addresses the point directly:

> Strategic and local organisations, working in partnership with the private sector, will need to build on these interventions and deliver additional new infrastructure, facilities and services in the LLV, including social infrastructure and transport projects, to support projected levels of household and employment growth and ensure that the LLV is actively integrated with its surrounding communities (GLA, 2007).

However, 'Places of Exchange', working as a narrative theme, suggests more about the quality of the inter-relationship between new and existing communities. According to the OAPF, they are locations where 'strategic and local organisations [should] collaborate to ensure that new and existing communities are actively integrated around the new opportunities'. In this way, 'Places of Exchange' functions as a narrative theme for expressing the coming together of new communities (code for the meta-theme of growth) and existing communities (code for deprivation) both to drive improvements in amenities for existing local residents, but also to change the way organisations work together. The interplay of meta-themes of Growth and Deprivation becomes the quality of a space, speaking to the values that should be attached to the services and the activities that take place there. Further 'Places of Exchange' implies a transformation in the civic sphere, as people come together in the public realm, in shops, bars, cafes, schools and leisure spaces and, not least, in the Park itself. Places of Exchange are places of meeting, interaction, sharing and mutual enrichment.

Olympics and Olympic legacy

A prescient reference to the Olympics is made in the 2001 Leaside Framework and Vision: 'The Stratford Railway Lands will accommodate a new Channel Tunnel station, a new regional shopping centre, housing and possibly elements of London's Olympic Games bid for 2012' (Leaside Regeneration Company, 2001). This short statement gives evidence to the fact that an informal grouping of campaigners, including former Chief Executive of London International Sport Richard Sumray, architect Richard Rogers, social entrepreneur Andrew Mawson and others, promoted the idea that the Olympic Games should take place in Stratford before the project was adopted and driven forward by the Mayor of London and latterly by national government. Andrew Mawson and his colleague Paul Brickell, then at Bromley by

Bow Centre, ensured that the reference was included the reference in the Leaside document.

In 2002/03, the Mayor of London decided to adopt the project and promote the Olympic bid via the GLA and the LDA, winning the backing of national government in the process. Masterplans for the scheme had been developed in 2004/05 by masterplanners EDAW, and indeed the scheme had been granted approval by the local planning authorities before the IOC determined the UK bid. However, the 2007 OAPF is the first official planning policy document to incorporate the scheme into the land use proposals for the Lea Valley. Incorporating the extensive masterplanning work carried out by EDAW, the OAPF interprets and establishes the policy context for the Lea Valley, encompassing the short-term development of the Olympic Park, the legacy redevelopment of the Park following the Games and the wider land use framework for the Lower Lea Valley as a whole. The treatment of the Olympics and Olympic legacy in the 2007 OAPF is somewhat dry and technical; with the emphasis on establishing land use planning policies. The comments by the Mayor of London in the preface adopt a similar approach that is free of rhetoric:

> The Valley will host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and is one of the most exciting and challenging urban regeneration opportunities in Britain, with the potential to accommodate up to 40,000 new homes and provide 50,000 new jobs (GLA, 2007).

The couplet 'Olympics/Olympic legacy' reflects and re-presents the meta-themes of 'London Growth' and 'East London Deprivation', now represented and viewed through the prism of the Olympic Games. As discussed above in respect of the concept of 'Convergence', the promise of Games legacy, for many years at least, became a high-profile way of discussing and packaging strategies to overcome poverty in the neighbourhoods around the Olympic Park.

Olympicopolis and 'a knowledge economy'
In the aftermath of the Olympic Games, London Mayor Boris Johnson authored a plan for 'Olympicopolis', a neighbourhood within the former Olympic Park in east London that would, by ambition, echo the creation of the redevelopment of South Kensington,

branded 'Albertopolis' following the Great Exhibition of 1851 that created the Victoria and Albert Museum. In this way, the term 'Olympicopolis' uses the rhetorical device of analogy to achieve its end. The narrative theme of 'Olympicopolis' tells a story, by analogy, of a great national event (the Olympics as an echo of the 1851 Great Exhibition in London), of the enrichment of London by the development of a new cultural and educational quarter populated by prestigious institutions (Stratford in the East is imagined as the mirror image of Kensington in the West) and promoted as the gift of Prince Albert (Mayor Johnson's contribution to London cultural life associated with the Prince's role in Victorian London). Olympicopolis grew from commitments he and his officers had secured from internationally renowned cultural bodies including the Victoria and Albert Museum, the London College of Fashion, University College London and Sadler's Wells to move to the Olympic Park.

The term 'knowledge economy' is an imprecise reference, on my part, to the attempts in the plans for the Lea Valley to envisage and propose concretely what the economic future of the Lea Valley might look like. The replacement of the hegemonic industrial presence in the Valley by a mixed economy is an enduring theme across the twenty year period, but there is considerable imprecision about the imagined mix of services, commerce, industry, culture, tech and digital sectors that might ensue. The 2014 Local Plan was written at a time when Here East had taken over the former Broadcasting Centre and set about creating a digital and tech quarter with high profile occupiers including BT Sport; Hackney Wick had established a reputation as a unique district of London with one of the highest concentrations of artists and makers in the capital in a local neighbourhood; Stratford City's International Quarter was in construction and commitments had been secured from end users including the Financial Conduct Authority and Transport for London; universities including University College London, London College of Fashion and Loughborough University. Economic development was starting to materialise and the Plan, based on a 2014 Business Survey (LLDC, 2014) was able to assert with confidence that the Park could attract 'creative, productive and cultural industries, as well as new innovative technology sectors' to occupy the commercial floorspace projected within the Plan. However, this growing certainty provided the context for a novel change in the grain of economic stories told in the plans for the Lower Lea. Two years earlier the Stratford

Metropolitan Masterplan used the metaphor of a 'Spectrum' to describe the emerging sectors in the local economy; making much of the diversity of employment spaces that Stratford could accommodate but doing so in a somewhat impressionistic way. The 2007 OAPF addresses the decline in demand for industrial space in a precise way based on London wide bespoke surveys and forecasts of industrial land demand, but also speaks of the need of a range of sectors that might provide new employment, making references, in broad terms, to the scope to develop environmental and creative sector uses in the Valley alongside a more diversified mixed-use economy with industry at its core.

London 'moving east'

The concept that London is 'moving east' finds its most explicit expression in the 'Stitching the Fringe' document written by DfL (2012), the urban design team of the GLA/LDA:

> Driven by the catalytic transformation of the games site, the Royal Docks and Canary Wharf, London's development is moving east and the Lower Lea Valley is accommodating a significant proportion of London's growth.

In this document, London's eastward growth is addressed as an emerging reality, rather than a future proposition. The genesis of the idea that east London would provide the main source of capacity to accommodate the planned growth of the metropolis was already long established, for example in the planning documents issued by government for the Thames Gateway in the 1980s, for which the London Docklands development was a practical example of the government's commitment to driving London's development towards the east.

The Arc of Opportunity Plan makes proposals for how 'this section of the Lower Lea Valley can be transformed so that it would become London's most sought-after commercial and residential district that contributes to London's status as a world city.' The Lower Lea Valley is constructed through this Plan into a place that can be a major growth location for London. The document argues that this potential will only be realised if east London can be repositioned imaginatively, addressing negative perceptions of the existing places and communities and establishing an attractive proposition for a place to invest and to live and work.

By contrast, the Leaside Framework engages with the idea of London's eastward growth in a different way. Its leading proposition is about the relationship between the life chances of existing communities, based on how the area might connect into or how the people may benefit from the growth of London eastwards. The Arc, and Stratford in particular, is a centre for growth, whereas Leaside is positioned as a place that is 'a lively part of a cosmopolitan world city', with a relationship to surrounding dynamism.

The 2007 Lower Lea Valley OAPF, perhaps surprisingly, does not make specific reference to the wider strategy for east London to accommodate London's overall requirements for growth and development, though of course London's eastward growth is already given by the 2004 London Plan: 'Areas of London that have not benefited from recent development – notably in parts of the east – should be prioritised for future development' (GLA, 2004). The OAPF is a supplementary planning guidance document to the 2004 London Plan, and the intended contribution of this district to the eastward growth of the city is explicit: the transformation of this section of the Lower Lea Valley into one of London's most sought after mixed commercial/residential districts that contributes to London's status as a world city. Here, the principal focus of the OAPF is on how to unlock the potential of the Valley and on the quality and scale of the proposed development.

The Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan makes a strong statement about Stratford's role in east London's growth:

> Stratford is at the heart of Newham's Arc of Opportunity, Europe's largest regeneration project, that's as well as hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. With exceptional transport connections, massive committed investments and a strong supply of development sites, Stratford is in pole position to lead the transformation of the whole of East London, including 46,000 new jobs and 20,000 new homes (LB Newham, 2011).

The claim is repeated elsewhere in this Masterplan: 'London is moving east; with Stratford sector become a vibrant new Centre for East London that will drive the future growth of the capital.' To underline these strong statements about Stratford's position in relation to London's growth, the Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan refers

to Stratford's emergence as a metropolitan centre, a designation in the London Plan, by referring to Stratford as London's Third City. This bold claim would have it that the currently deprived town centre is on a journey to become as significant to London as is the traditional City of London and Westminster. The 2012 OLSPG document is more couched in its claims in line with the broader tone of the script. However, the OLSPG is more specific about the basis upon which the Lower Lea Valley will contribute to the future world city: the changes will 'create a new part of London built around Lea Valley's unique network of waterways and open spaces' (GLA, 2012a).

Finally, the 2014 Local Plan positions the Olympic Park as a place in east London as follows:

> a new heart for East London, securing investment from across London and beyond, attracting and nurturing talent to create, design and make world beating twenty-first century goods and services, and becoming a place where local residents and new arrivals choose to live, work and enjoy themselves, and where businesses choose to locate and invest (LLDC, 2014).