

Planning the metropolitan region

The debate over the 2014
review of the London Plan

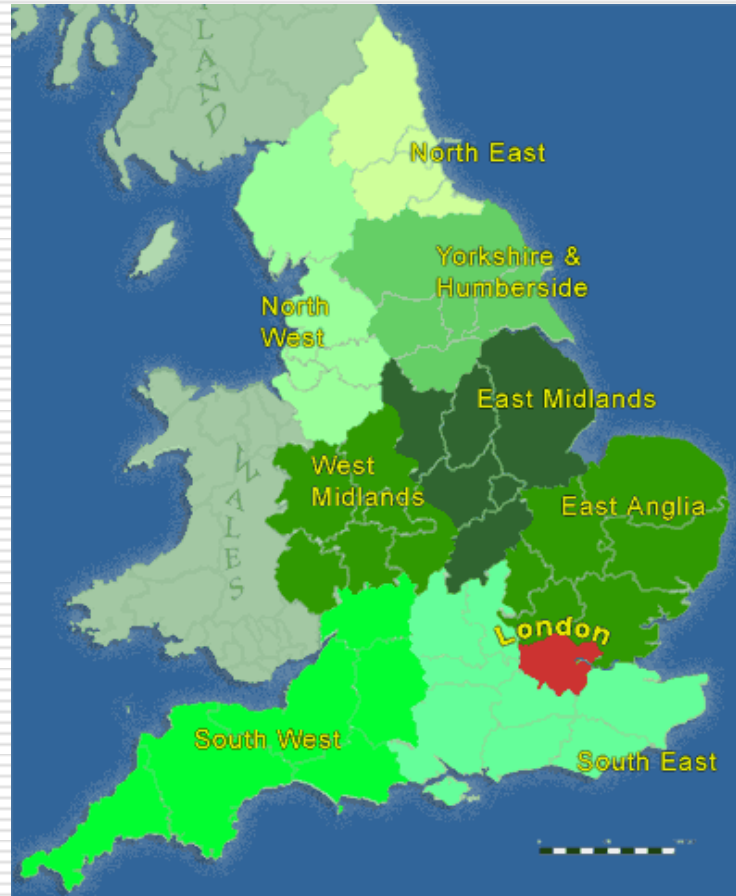
RSA Winter Conference, London
Duncan Bowie

27-8 November 2014

Research questions

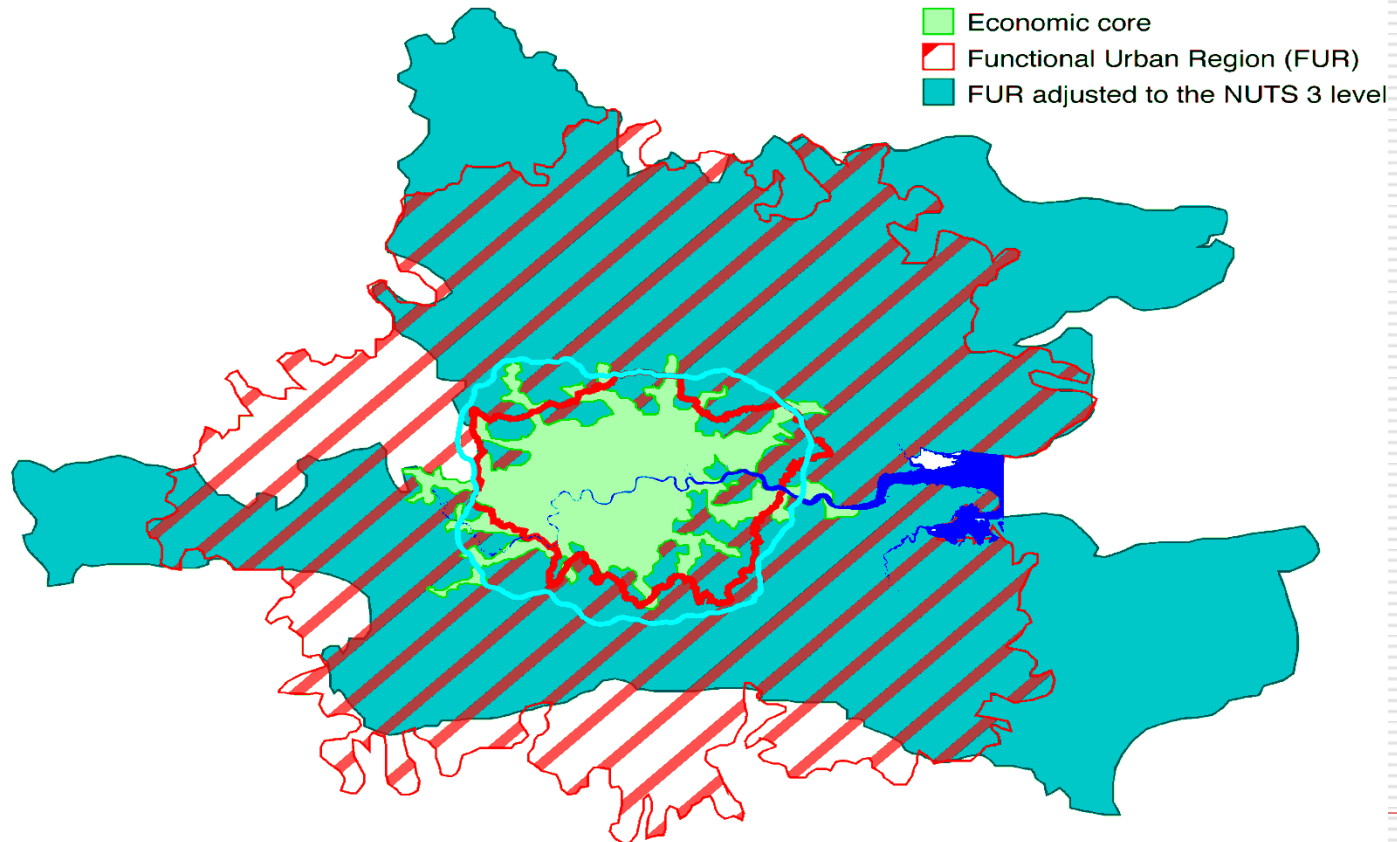
- ❑ Is the compact city concept approach to London strategic planning still valid ?
 - ❑ Are the governance arrangements capable of responding to these challenges ?
 - ❑ Is the London metropolitan region a case study of success or failure of metropolitan regional planning and governance ?
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Context: The Former Planning Regions



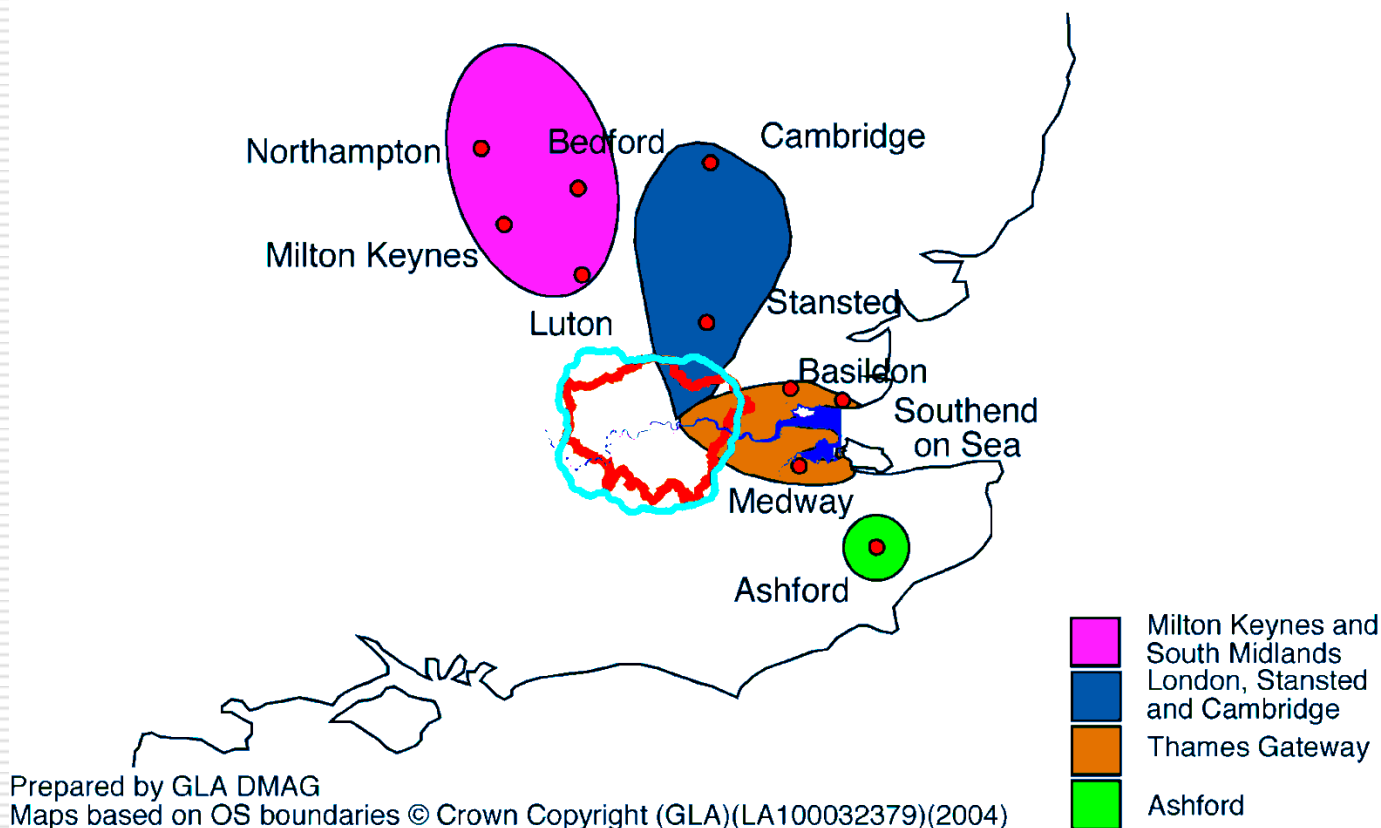
Context: The Functional Urban Region

The Functional Urban Region

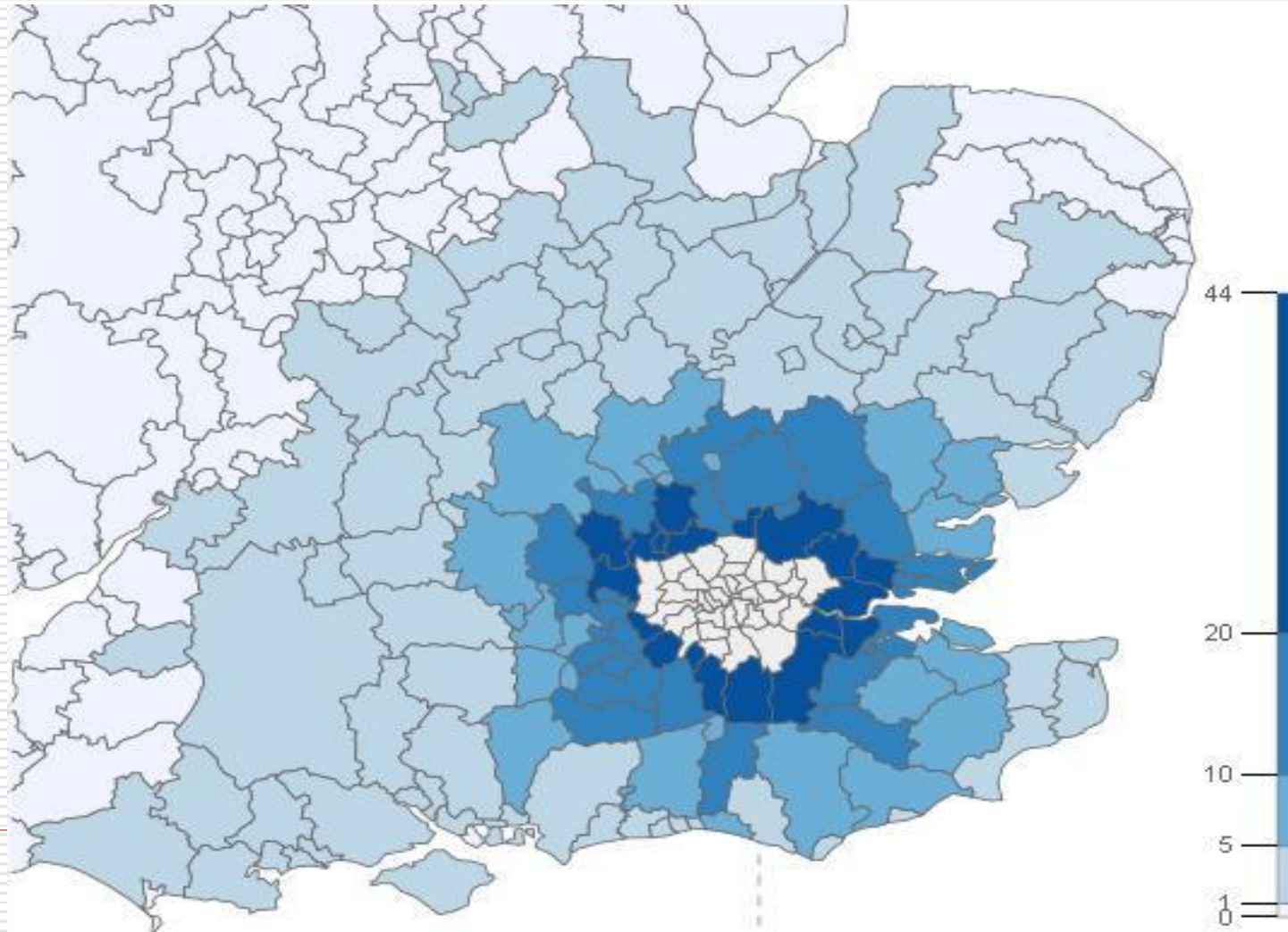


Context: The Former Growth Areas

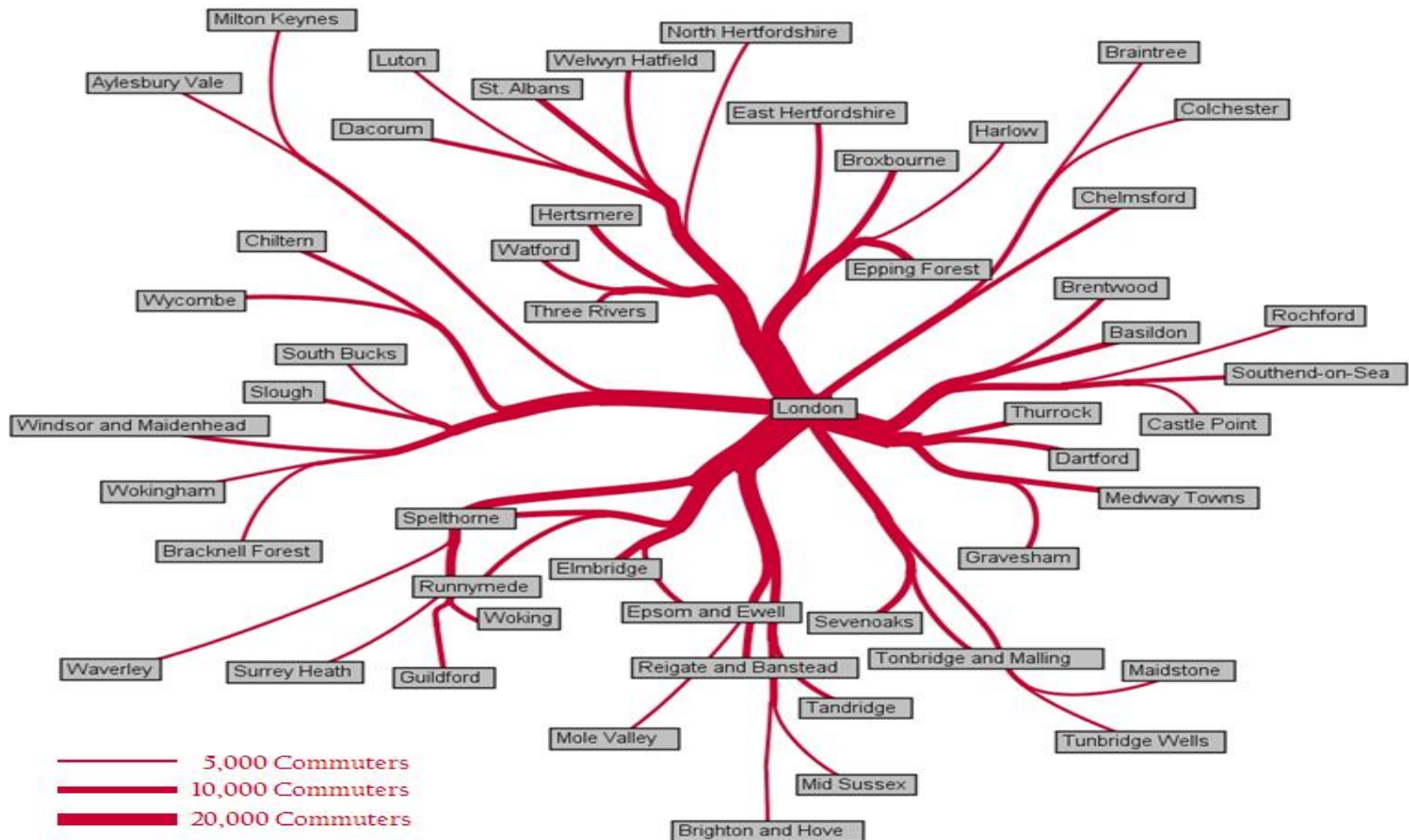
Government Sustainable Communities Plan



Context: Commuting



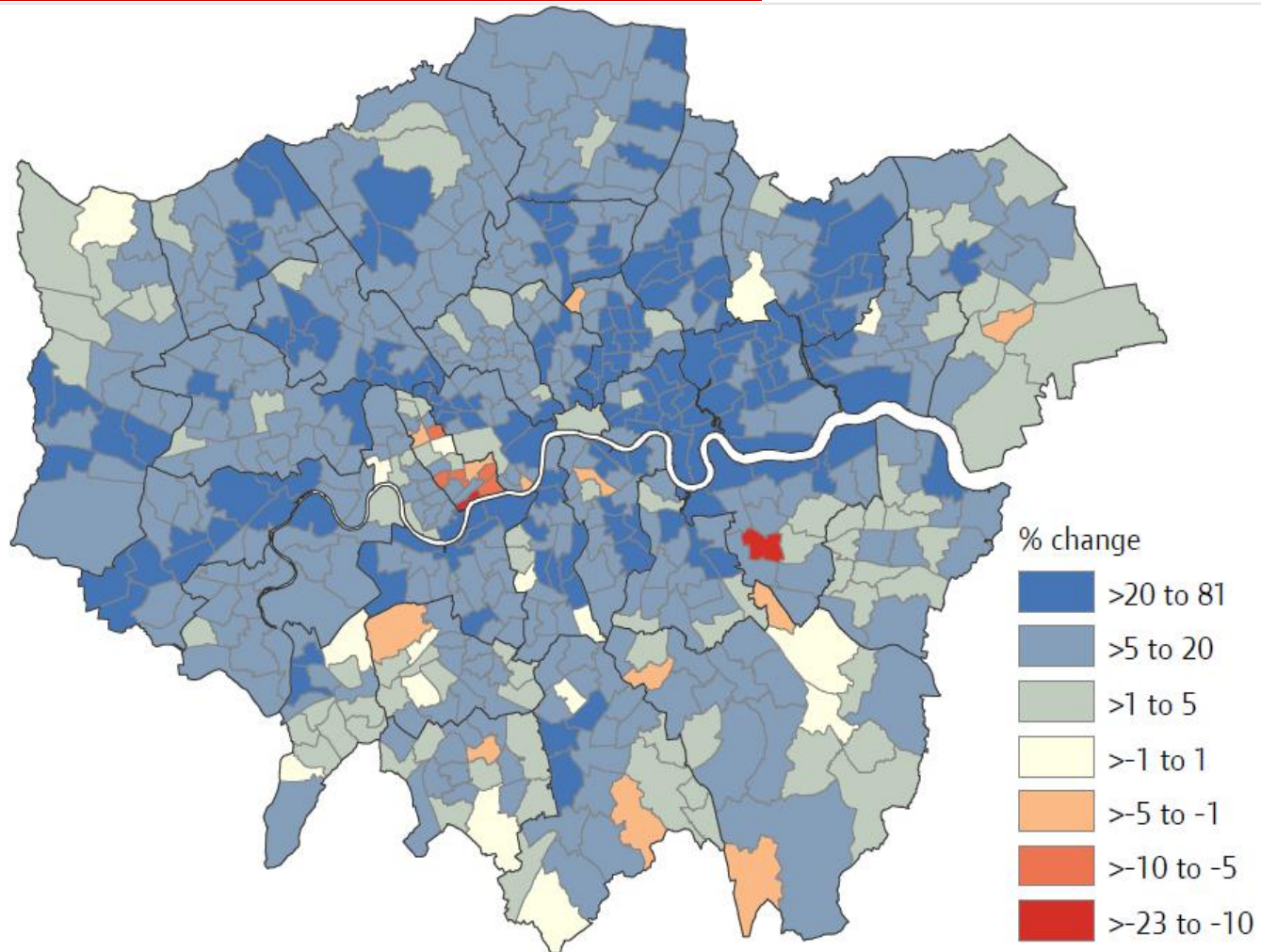
Context: London Commuting



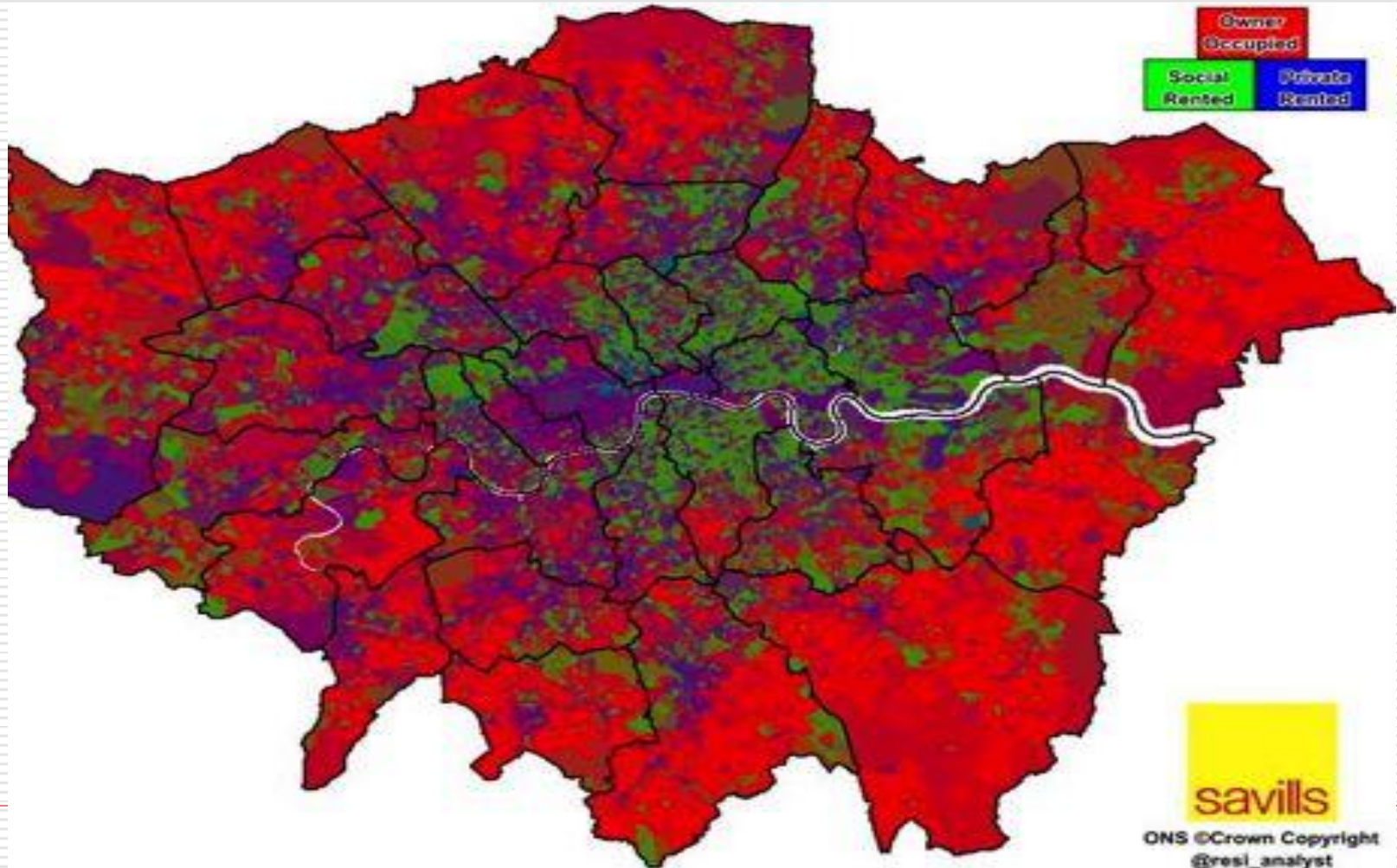
The compact city assumption

- ❑ Assumption since 2004 London Plan that London can meet all its future needs within existing London boundary
 - ❑ London needs at least 62,000 more homes a year over next 20 years; South east region needs at least 40,000 homes a year
 - ❑ For next 10 years, proposed London capacity based target of 42,000 leaves a deficit of at least 20,000 homes a year relative to projected demand
 - ❑ Compact City assumption ignores relationship between location of employment capacity, residential capacity and transport connectivity. London is not a self contained travel to work area
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Population growth 2001-2011

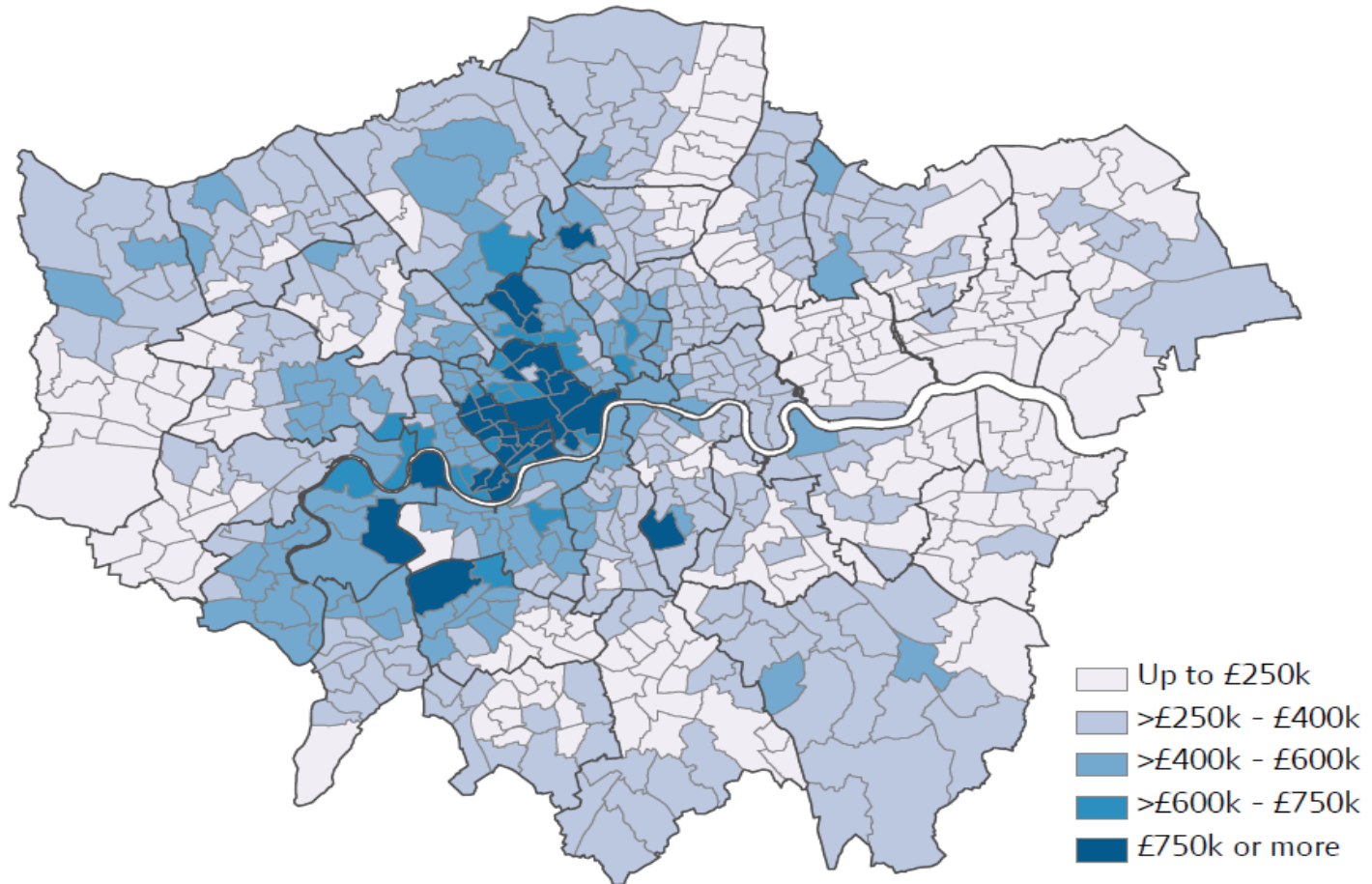


Existing spatial polarisation of tenure



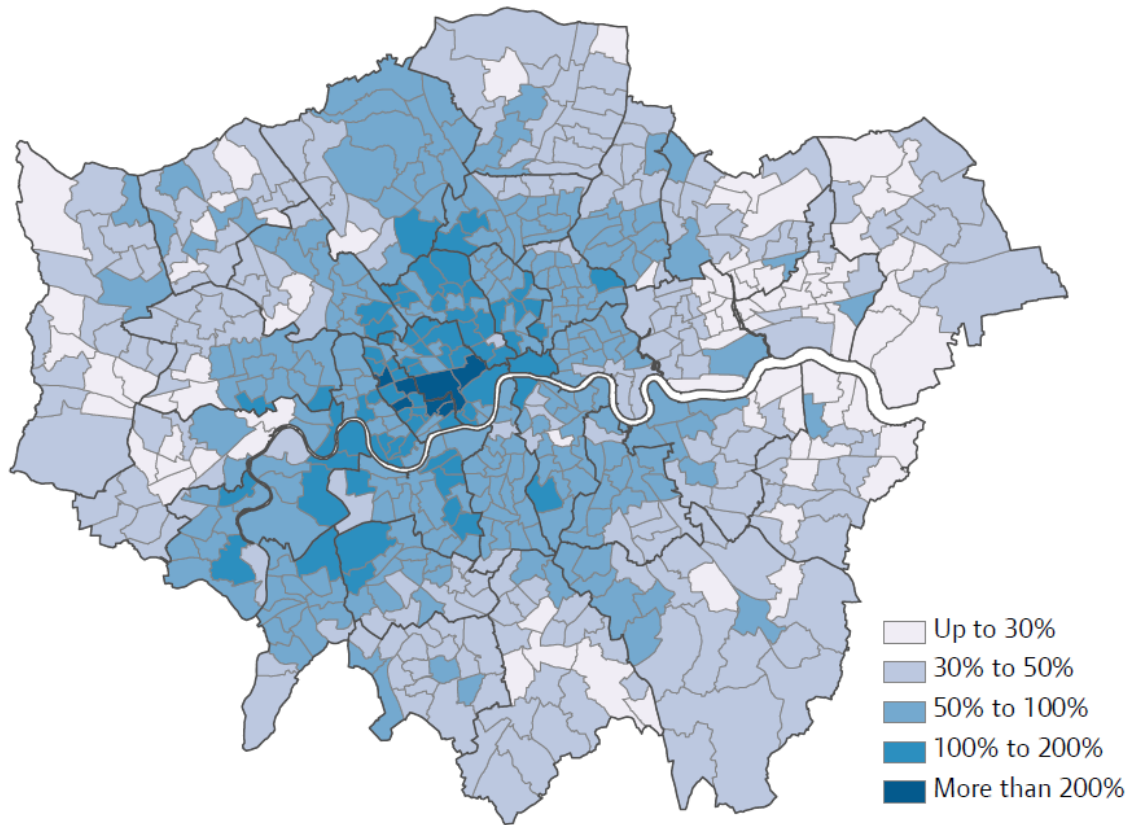
Spatial distribution of houseprices

Median house price by ward, 2013



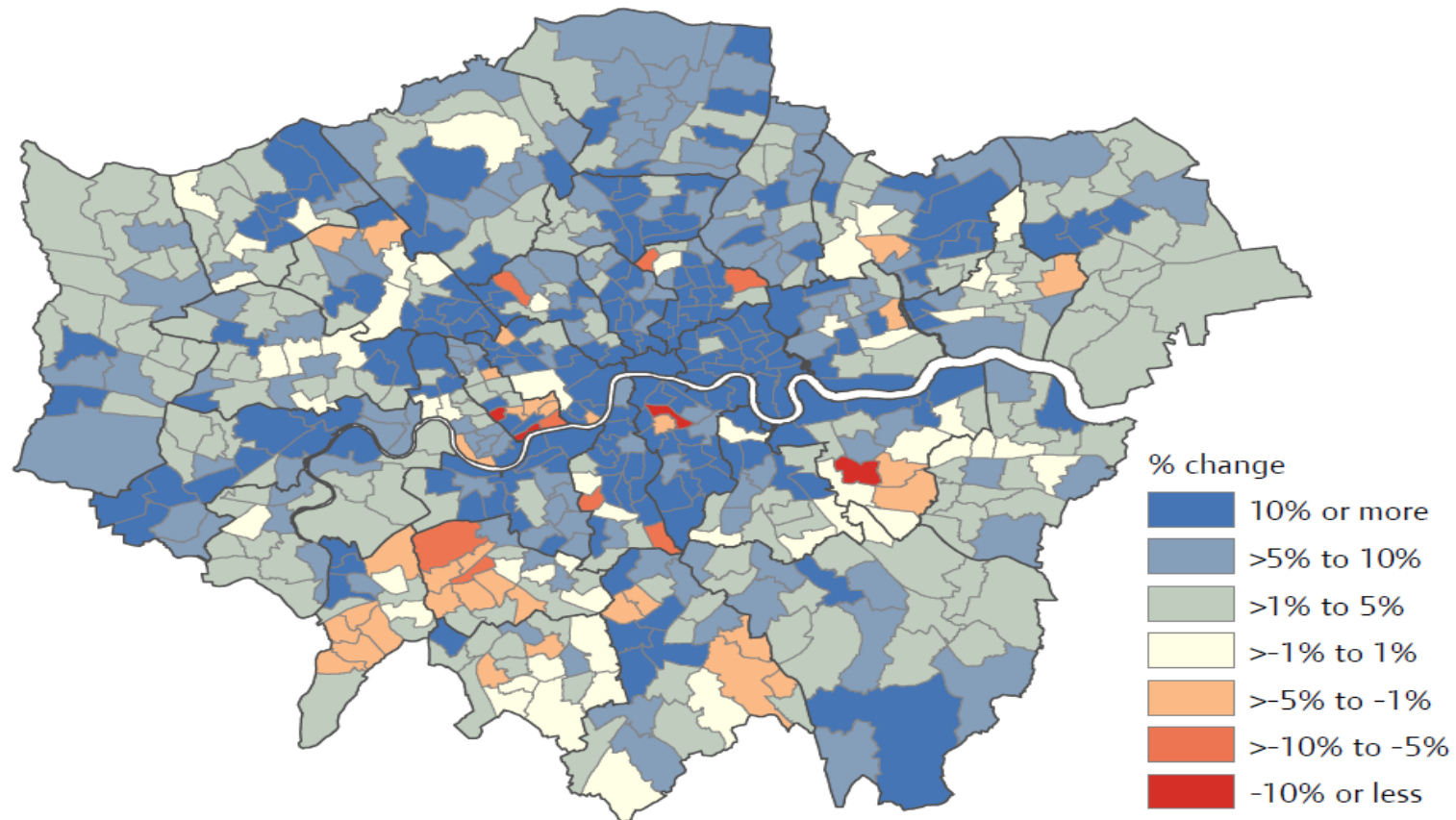
Spatial distribution of house price changes

Change in median house price by ward, 2003 to 2013



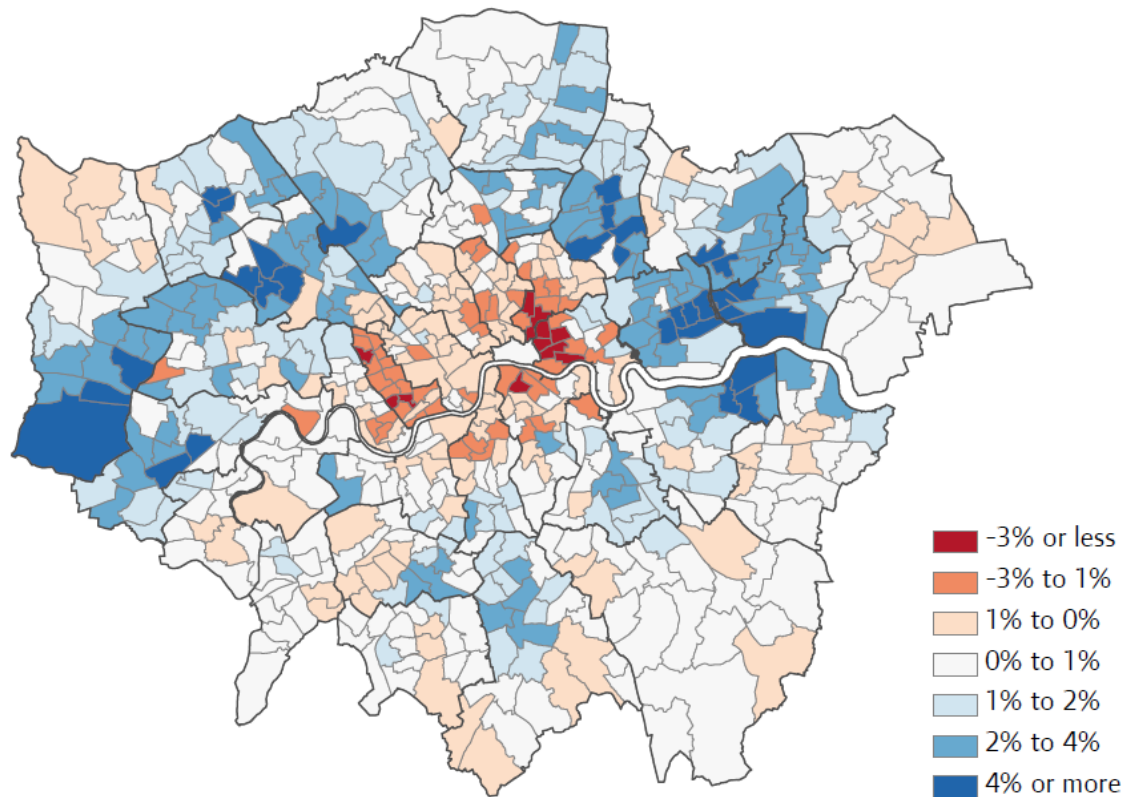
Most new homes are being provided in central London

Change in number of dwellings by ward, 2001-11



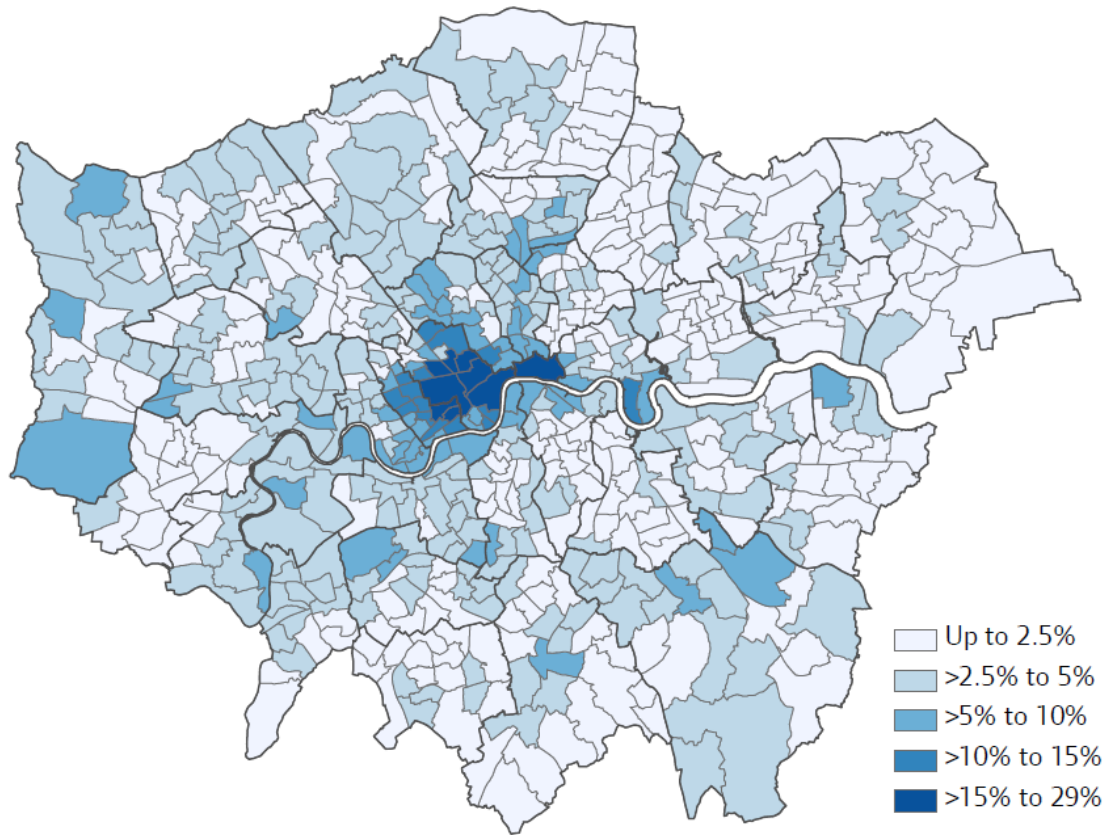
Overcrowding growing in West and Northeast London

Percentage point change in overcrowding rate (persons per room)
by ward, 2001 to 2011



Hollowing out of inner West London

Household spaces without usual residents as % of total by ward, 2011



Spatial Impact of policy changes

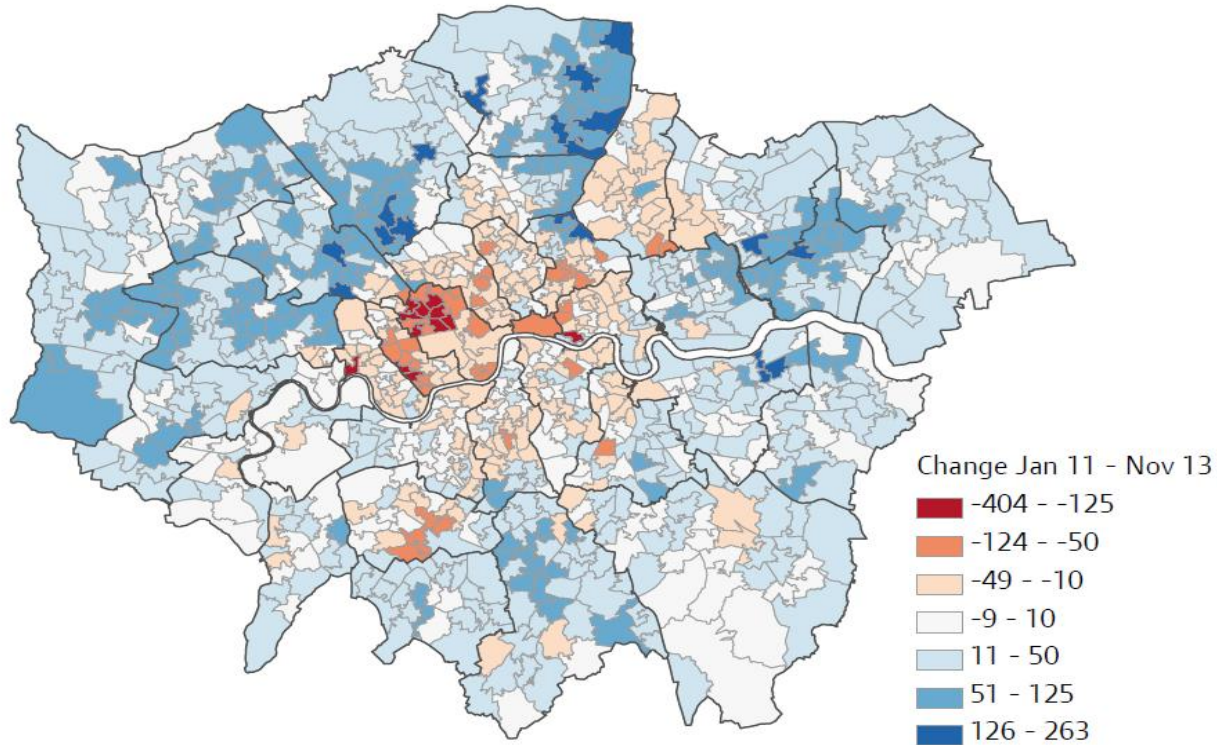
- ❑ Government abandonment of growth areas with development depending on local consent. Strong resistance to new housing development in most suburban boroughs and Home Counties. Neighbourhood Planning generally not helping. Duty to Co-operate between local authorities not working.
 - ❑ No central government funding for social rented housing so collapse of social rented housing programme, especially in higher cost/value areas
 - ❑ Planning policy changes make it very difficult for boroughs to use planning gain agreements to fund social rented homes – though some off site deals in central London.
 - ❑ Housing benefit cuts forcing lower income households out of higher value areas and increasing spatial social polarisation
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The affordability crisis

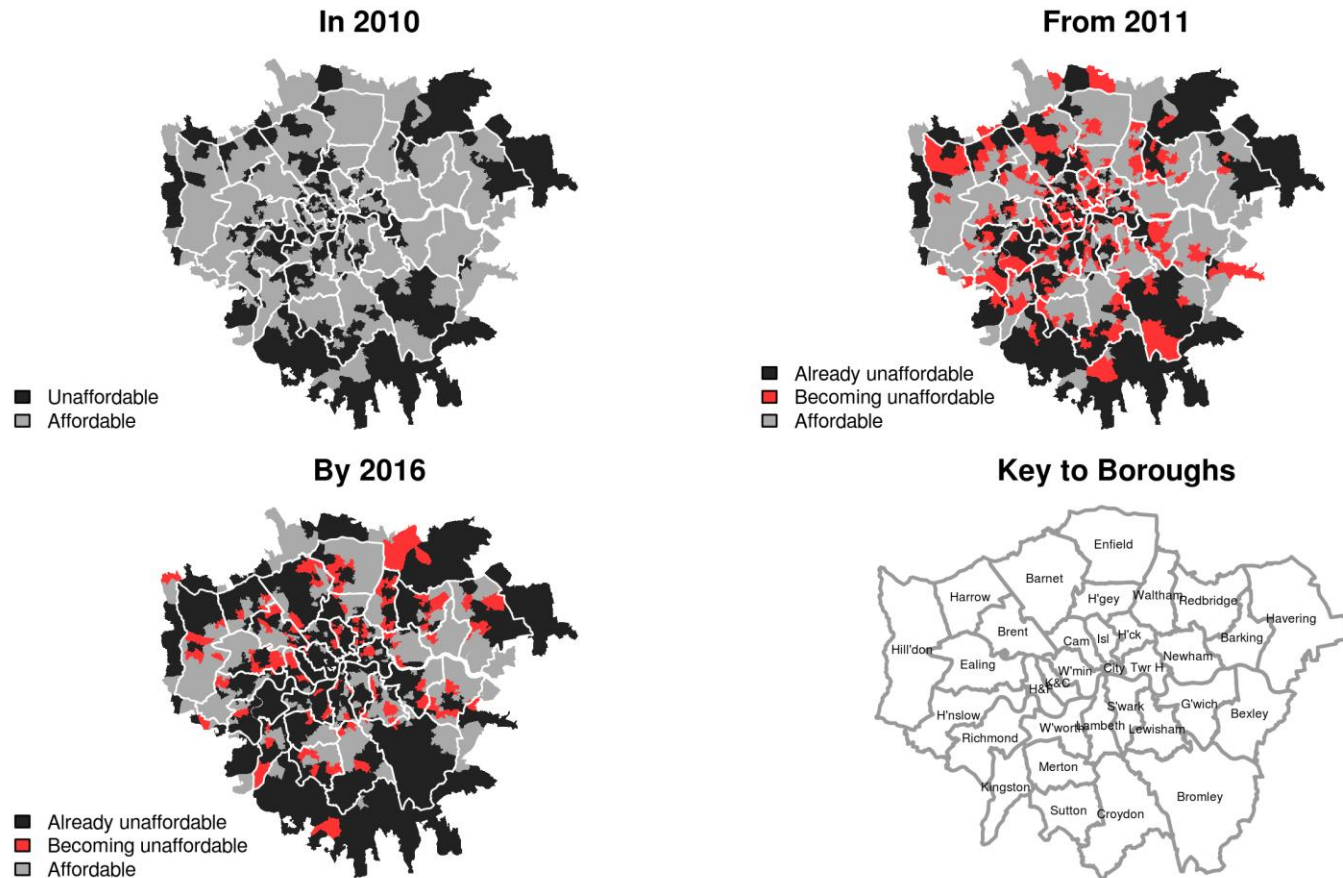
- ❑ House prices now climbing again – average London houseprice is £544,000 – above the January 2008 peak
 - ❑ Average deposit for first time buyer was £59,221 – with Help to Buy, 5% mortgage requirement = £26,000
 - ❑ Household income of £146,000 needed to borrow £518,000
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Housing benefit households moving to Outer London (and beyond)

Change in deregulated private rented sector Housing Benefit caseload by London Middle Super Output Area, Jan 2011 to Nov 2013

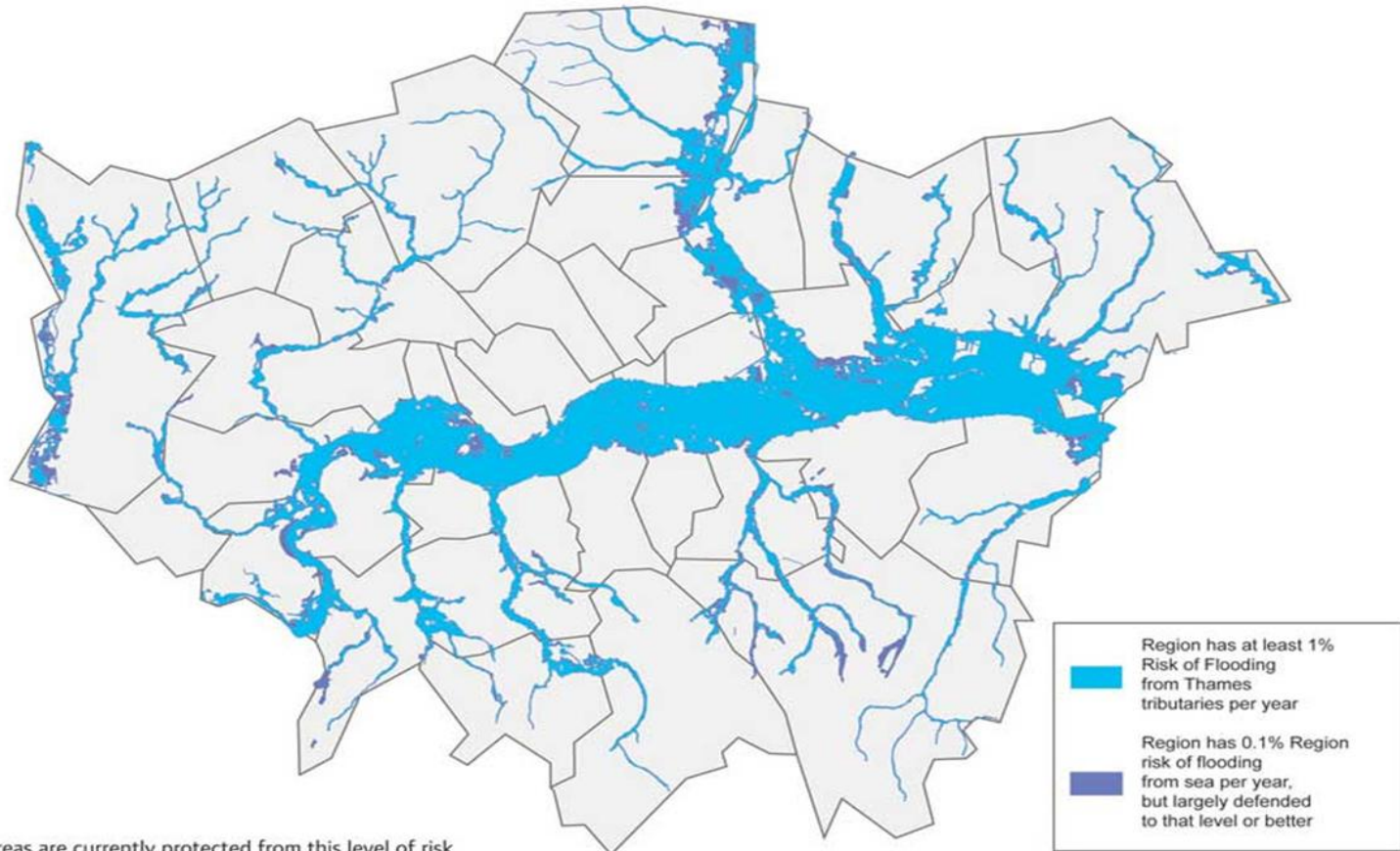


Most of London becoming unaffordable for private tenants



Development Constraint 1: The Flood Plain

Indicative Flood Risk Areas

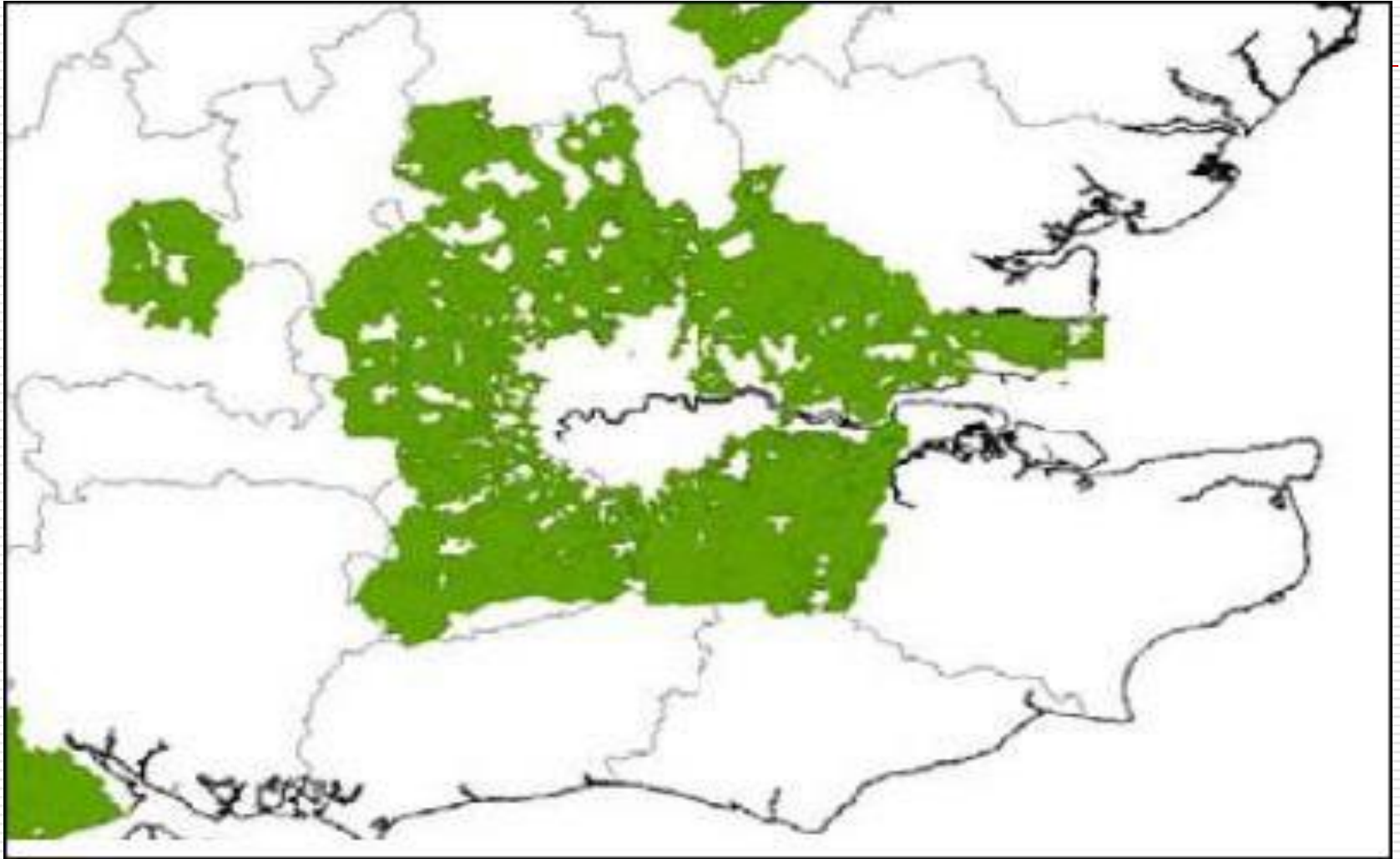


Note Source These areas are currently protected from this level of risk
Environment Agency

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Diagram: GLA, The London Plan – consolidated with alterations since 2004 (2008)
www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan

Development Constraint 2: The Green Belt



The list of options (not mutually exclusive)

- ❑ Hyperdense development in city centre and city fringes
 - ❑ Hyperdense development in Opportunity Areas
 - ❑ Higher densities in suburban town centres
 - ❑ Suburban intensification
 - ❑ Planned Urban extensions
 - ❑ A new programme of garden cities within the green belt
 - ❑ A new programme of garden cities or garden towns beyond the green belt
 - ❑ Residential dispersal to other parts of UK (without employment dispersal)
 - ❑ Residential dispersal to other parts of UK supported by a regional economic policy and planned relocation of employment
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London's Development capacity

- ❑ The five yearly Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMAA)
 - ❑ London's annual development target increased from 23,000 (2004) to 30,500 (2007) and then to 32,100 (2011) Current proposal would increase target to 42,000
 - ❑ GLA arguing that with additional town centre intensification, capacity could be increased to 49,000 a year.
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London's housing needs

- ❑ Strategic Housing market assessment has 2 components
 - ❑ Housing requirement to meet household population growth
 - ❑ Housing requirement to meet accumulated backlog of unmet housing need
SHMAA had 2 estimates;
 - ❑ 62,000 homes a year if backlog of housing need met over 10 years
 - ❑ 49,000 homes a year if backlog of housing need met over 20 years
 - ❑ Government guidance is that housing targets should be normally based on meeting backlog over 5 years
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Importance of migration assumptions

- ❑ Government (ONS) publishes regional population and household growth projections
 - ❑ Mayor's demography publish their own figures
 - ❑ Mayor assumes a higher rate of out-migration to Greater South East than ONS
 - ❑ Greater Southeast districts use ONS figures
 - so nearly 7,000 households a year are unplanned for
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Housing in the London Metropolitan Region

- ❑ Local districts outside London setting own housing targets and need to consult Mayor
 - ❑ Mayor wrote to Bedford and then to Elmbridge asking them to plan to contribute to London's housing supply deficit
 - ❑ Most Home Counties districts appeared at London Plan Examination in Public to a) complain that the Mayor had not adequately consulted them before publishing the draft new Plan; b) reject Mayor's assumptions on out migration and c) argue that London should meet its needs within London, even if this includes Green Belt development. Mayoral target should be increased to 49,000 pa
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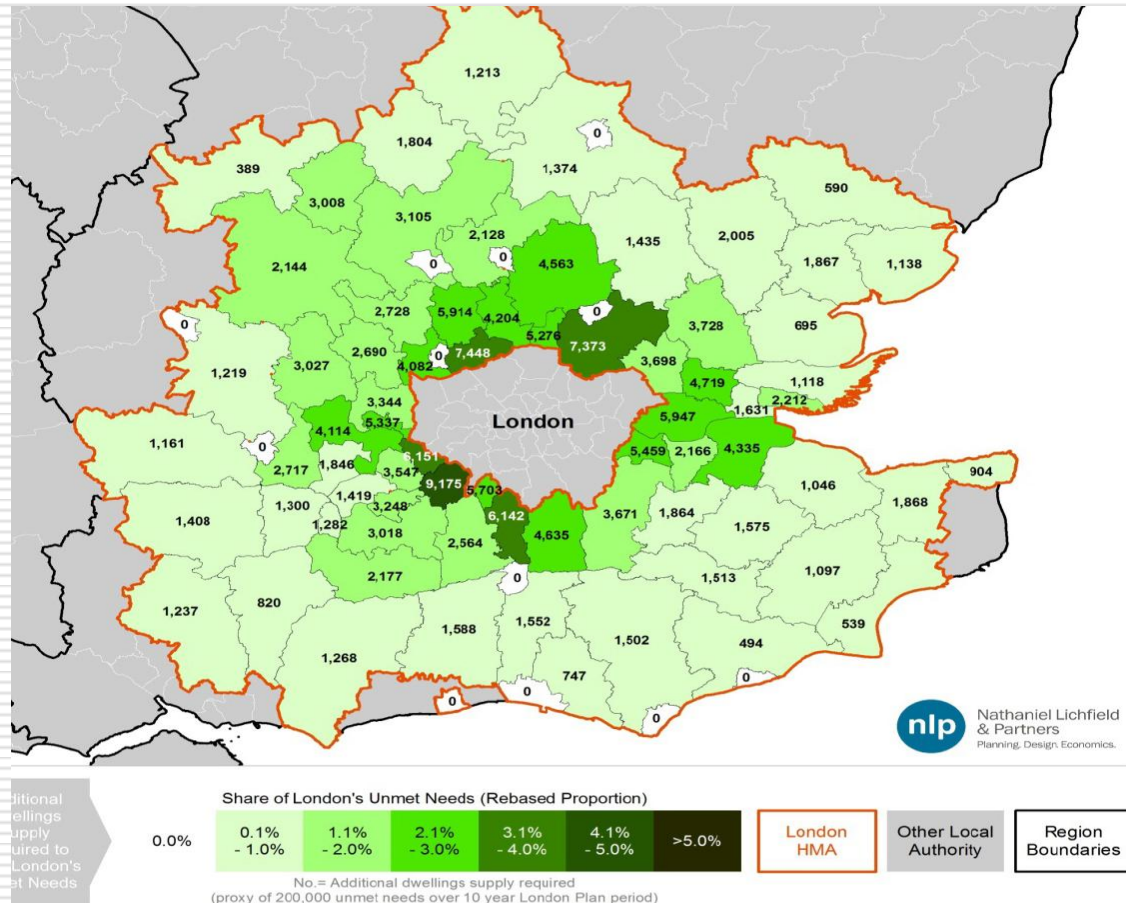
Mayoral response

- ❑ Mayor does not consider review of Green Belt within London necessary
 - ❑ Mayor believed there was capacity for 49,000 homes a year, through residential intensification of underused local high streets, but additional 7,000 could not as yet be distributed between 33 boroughs
 - ❑ London would not after all impose requirements on the Greater South East – the Compact City approach remained viable
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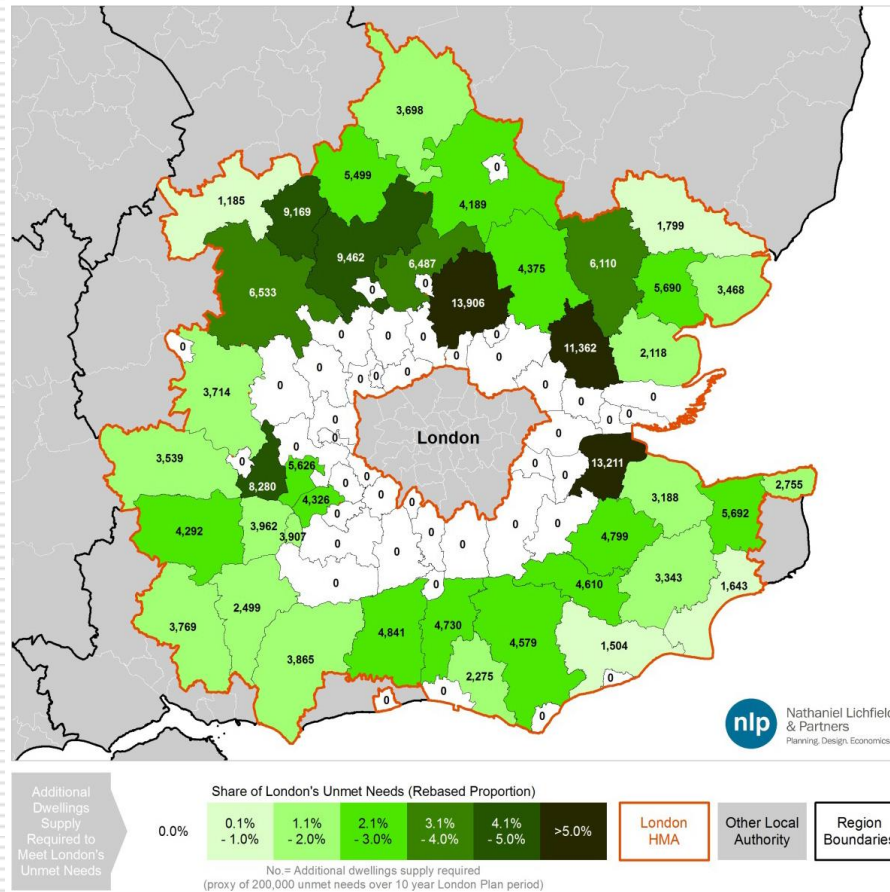
Dispersal across the Greater SouthEast

- ❑ Potential for medium densities, mix of built forms, mix of tenures and mix of levels of affordability
 - ❑ Need to ensure access to jobs in London (travel cost issues) and in Home Counties centres
 - ❑ Dilemma 1: land is cheap in areas which are economically weak/ and or isolated, while more expensive in economically strong centres
 - ❑ Dilemma 2: within or beyond the Green Belt ?
The further away from London, the greater the travel costs to central London.
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NLP Option 1



NLP Option 2



Impact of Governance Structures

- ❑ No national spatial plan
 - ❑ Abolition of Regional Planning outside London by Coalition Government
 - ❑ Failure of Duty Co-operate
 - ❑ Inadequacy of Mayoral practice in relation to duty to inform and consult neighbouring authorities
 - ❑ No consistent assessment of housing need and capacity
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Outcomes

- ❑ Cross boundary policy conflicts: housing; employment; retail provision; parking' waste management
 - ❑ No linkage between spatial planning decisions and infrastructure investment decisions at national or metropolitan regional level
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A way forward ?

- ❑ Need for a comprehensive review of alternative development options
 - ❑ Need for agreement on site selection criteria – environmental, economic and social sustainability
 - ❑ A combined SHMA for the metropolitan region
 - ❑ A combined SHLAA for the metropolitan region
 - ❑ A mechanism for setting district level housing targets across the metropolitan region
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Possible governance options

- ❑ A new advisory body similar to pre 2000 SERPLAN (South East Regional Planning Conference)
 - ❑ A new statutory regional planning body – directly or indirectly elected ?
 - ❑ A statutory duty on Home Counties districts to established combined authorities for strategic planning purposes with a new statutory duty on Mayor and South East combined authorities to jointly produce a metropolitan region strategic plan.
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Conclusions

- ❑ Significant failure in metropolitan region planning
 - ❑ Need for agreement on spatial planning across metropolitan city region including criteria for selection of locations for major new developments
 - ❑ A new metropolitan region planning body is essential – need for consultation on alternative governance structures
 - ❑ Returning to metropolitan region planning as understood by Raymond Unwin, Patrick Abercrombie and Peter Hall ?
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