



London Government Dinner

Mansion House

Thursday 12th January 2012

The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of London

Alderman David Wootton

**Mayor of London, Chairman of London Councils, My Lords, Your Worships,
Fellow Aldermen, Sheriffs, Chief Commoner, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish you all a very happy new year and a warm welcome to “Mansion House”. First of all, I want to pay a very special tribute to the City’s Chairman of Policy and Resources, Stuart Fraser, who is standing down from that role in May. Stuart, you have been a great servant – and we are grateful indeed to you.

Can I offer a very special welcome to you, Jules, and to you, Boris.

Jules, you are a great servant to a great borough – and this Lord Mayor stands in awe of any Mayor elected no less than three times.

Boris, you have become a role model to me. Not, I should quickly add, because this resolutely non-party-political Lord Mayor wishes to express any party affiliation, but because you remain the spin doctors’ worst nightmare.

I have prayed you in aid in fending off my own press officer. It's like being back at school: he tells me "I wouldn't put it like that" or "I'm not sure I like the colour of your tie" or, most damningly of all: "We're going to have to do something about the hair" - to which the response of this happily hirsute Lord Mayor is – "what about Boris's hair? He seems to do alright". Answer comes there none.

And, Boris, I am very much looking forward to your special brand of verbal pyrotechnics – indeed, I trust they will match up to the pyrotechnical display we so enjoyed on the Thames on New Year's Eve – fabulous fireworks to celebrate London and a great way to welcome in 2012.

I'm sure we will see a few more rhetorical fireworks during this London election year. But we have other unique and great opportunities to light up our great city to the world in the Olympics, the Paralympics, the Dickens Bicentenary and the Diamond Jubilee: our economic strength, our rich, diverse, tolerant culture and our great history: the world's first truly global city.

But London is great not because of its size, but because of its people and the contribution they make and their connections within the UK and right across the world. Because if London does well, the UK does well. If the UK does well, London does well. If London is strong, the UK is strong.

I have seen this for myself. Ours is an age when, because we share a common future and common goals, when we must bridge perceived divides: divides between the public and the private sectors – so we must continue to find innovative and sustainable ways of delivering vital public services - and between the City and the rest of London.

The City in all its forms has a special role in helping to create jobs and growth for the rest of London. As a centre for financial, professional and business services, where business looks to raise capital, manage risk and procure world class products and services. Services and capital that are not an end in themselves, but best deployed in support of the wider economy.

In supporting cutting edge new industries at Tech City, the fastest growing cluster of businesses in Europe, here in London - and now stretching from Islington, to Hackney, to Tower Hamlets and into Newham. Creating wealth and jobs, not just for entrepreneurs and innovators, but right along the supply chain and right across the country. New products and markets, new jobs, new connections.

Through schemes such as our innovative “business angels” programme, using City expertise and resources to support cutting edge business – especially in the vital SME sector - in our neighbouring boroughs. Helping London business and London workers to be equipped with the skills, the expertise and the resources to drive forward growth and create jobs for Londoners.

In the City’s great network of charities and support for those in need – and the City Corporation will shortly be announcing its own contribution to mark Her Majesty’s Diamond Jubilee – a real contribution to tackling the blight of youth unemployment to honour the contribution of a universally respected head of state.

In finding new ways of financing regeneration and social enterprise. Thinking creatively about how to maximise the benefits of investment to society as a whole over the long term, a new model of risk and return for

investors, so that charities, voluntary organisations – the third sector – can unlock new investment, new finance and deliver new services.

So the City Corporation, with our charity arm, the City Bridge Trust, is helping to find the right model that will deliver these great prizes, a new model that can be replicated across a new market.

In the services we provide working with the boroughs – our open spaces, vital recreational space for a densely populated urban centre; or by City Police, the national lead force on fraud and which works closely with the Met in tackling terrorism.

In thinking about how we can best serve our communities. So next week the City Corporation, in partnership with London Councils, will be publicising at a major Westminster seminar, our new research by Tony Travers, on what localism can mean in the distinct and distinctive environment of London, on how we can apply this concept in practice, and how the partnership between the public and the private sectors can grow and flourish. New thinking and new forms of delivering public services. New connections within our communities and between them.

We must bridge any division between London and the rest of the country. A job in London is not at the expense of a worker in Liverpool or Llandaff or Livingston. It is far more likely to create jobs and growth right across the supply chain and right across the country. A job in London also creates an economic footprint – and a job in financial services, a job in the City, is responsible for at least one other job in the wider economy.

These are not my views. But the message put to me loudly and clearly during my visit to Cardiff before Christmas: that Wales welcomed a strong London and a strong City – because that helped attract investment and

business to Wales and helped create jobs and growth for the people of Wales. A quarter of Cardiff jobs are in financial services – and they want more. 124,000 Welsh jobs – 16% of total employment – are in financial services alone – and the strength and the attractiveness of London to business helped create the right environment for those jobs – and creates the prospect for more.

I am delighted that London's worth, our value, our utility is seen in these terms: as critical for the creation of jobs and growth for London and Londoners – and right across the UK.

So I take pride in the City's connections across the country. And I am just as proud to promote great British industries with very personal connections for me: the wool trade – with Paul Smith suits on display here this evening – and the potteries – take a look at the windowsills on the staircase as you leave this evening.

So I welcome the Government's plans to continue to invest and invest heavily in the UK's infrastructure – and continue to focus on upgrading London's own infrastructure. It is vital for the City – which welcomes over 300,000 people – our workers, most of them your residents - every working day. It is vital for London's economy.

But it is just as important for the UK as a whole, because the success of London's infrastructure supports the success of London's economy – and the success of London's economy and access to it supports success for the UK as a whole.

Boris, Jules, during the Summer, the Olympic symbol will be illuminated on the City Corporation's best known building, Tower Bridge: two iconic, universally understood symbols for a unique event in a unique city. The

five rings of the Olympics embody a shared endeavour, a system of mutual interconnection and obligation. This epitomises not just the Olympic ideal, but London itself - and London's relationship with the rest of the United Kingdom: each part owes something to the whole - each part contributes to the whole.

I do not doubt that 2012 will be a year of great challenge, for London, for the United Kingdom and for the world. I am wholly aware of the great economic and political difficulties we must surmount at home and abroad. But I know that it will be a great year for London and its people. We have unique attributes, a unique population and we make a unique contribution to the service of the nation and we are vital to the success and the prosperity of the nation.

And as those who work for London, for Londoners and through them for everyone across the United Kingdom, it is our very special responsibility to serve the people, and to help create that shared prosperity and that shared future.

So I would ask you all now to rise for the toast. The toast is:

THE MAYOR OF LONDON AND THE LONDON ASSEMBLY, THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL, THE LONDON BOROUGHS AND THE OTHER GOVERNING BODIES OF GREATER LONDON.

1560 words

