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Panel on Development

Meeting on 27 November 2007

Proposed overseas duty visit for the studies of the Panel on town planning and urban renewal

Purpose

      This paper invites members to consider whether the Panel on Development (the Panel) should conduct an overseas duty visit to consolidate the Panel's ongoing studies on town planning and urban renewal.

Background

2.   During the 2006-2007 legislative session, the Panel had actively monitored the work of the Government and relevant public bodies on town planning and urban renewal. In light of growing public concern over ongoing and planned development projects and urban renewal projects, the Panel continues to actively monitor relevant Government policies and related matters in the current legislative session.

Town planning

3.   The Panel and the Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the Central Waterfront (including the Tamar Site) formed under the Panel had studied a number of development projects and planning proposals during the 2006-2007 legislative session. These projects/planning proposals include the Kai Tak Development, the Wan Chai Development Phase II, the Revised Concept Plan for Lantau, and the refinement of the planning framework for the new Central harbourfront. The Panel will continue to monitor these development/planning proposals as the planning work proceeds to an advanced stage. The announcement of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen joint development of the Lok Ma Chau Loop and the revival of the planning work on New Development Areas (NDAs) in the 2007 Policy Address of the Chief

Executive has prompted the Panel to start examining the planning issues pertaining to these projects. These projects will have important social, economic and environmental impacts on Hong Kong.

4.   Apart from the development projects on the Government's agenda, the Panel will continue to keep abreast of topical planning issues that are of wide public concern and/or have important implications for the community.   Indeed, the Panel is aware that public awareness in town planning matters has heightened considerably in recent years and new trends of community participation in and public debates on town planning matters have emerged.   In this regard, Panel members have revealed their relevant observations during past discussions and some salient points are recapitulated below --

    (a) There are growing sentiments within the community towards conservation of historic buildings and heritage features and thus there is a need to undertake a critical review of territory-wide as well as district-based planning strategies with a view to striking the right balance between development and conservation;

    (b) The public's aspirations for quality living space have risen with crucial changes in terms of priorities and emphases; as such, it is imperative for the Government and relevant agencies to articulate and translate the present-day public aspirations into concrete planning strategies and measures;

    (c) The present town planning mechanisms have failed to ensure that the views and concerns of stakeholders can be effectively gauged and channeled to the relevant authorities; as such, the Government is often confronted with strong dissenting views for its planning decisions that are purported to have undergone due statutory and public consultation procedures;

    (d) The present planning control and building approval mechanisms are inadequate to ensure that important planning intentions can be effectively implemented; and

    (e) Effective mechanisms for public engagement in the planning process are yet to be devised, notwithstanding that there is growing enthusiasm among Hong Kong people in town planning matters.   Such mechanisms are important for harnessing the wisdom and enthusiasm of the civic society and for building up community consensus in planning matters.

Urban renewal

5.	The Panel is aware that there is growing public concern over urban renewal in the community. The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) has launched a number of urban renewal projects since its establishment in May 2001 and various problems have come into light during the implementation process. During the 2006-2007 legislative session, the Panel had reviewed the work of URA with the Administration and URA at several meetings, giving particular attention to the planning approach and implementation strategies adopted by URA in delivering redevelopment projects.

6.	While the URA purports to adopt a holistic "4Rs" strategy[1] to address the problem of urban decay and to improve the living conditions of the residents, members in general have observed that the main approach adopted by URA is to "evacuate, demolish and redevelop", as opposed to conservation and revitalization. This approach falls far short of meeting public aspirations of bringing vibrancy and quality living space to old districts in a sustainable manner, as local heritage and community networks are uprooted in the renewal process. Moreover, the land resumption process of URA's redevelopment projects is often protracted and acrimonious, and affected property owners and tenants often complain that their interests are not adequately protected under the relevant legislation and URA's compensation policy. Members have also pointed out that the present mode of operation of URA cannot effectively cater for a collaborative approach whereby the affected residents can play an active role in the planning process or opt to have a stake in the redevelopment projects.

7.	As the Government provides policy guidelines on urban renewal for URA through the Urban Renewal Strategy, which was promulgated in November 2001, members consider it high time to undertake a comprehensive review of the Urban Renewal Strategy. At its meeting on 23 October 2007, the Panel decided that it would keep a close watch on the work of URA and its future plans, and, where appropriate, review the relevant policies and strategies with the Administration and URA.

Proposed study on relevant overseas experiences

8.	In view of the importance and complexity of the issues pertaining to town planning and urban renewal, at the Panel meeting on 24 July 2007, members supported Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing's proposal for the Panel to study relevant overseas experiences to shed lights on the relevant world trends and

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[1] The "4Rs" include the redevelopment of dilapidated buildings, rehabilitation of buildings in need of repair, revitalization of the economic and environmental fabric of old districts and preservation of buildings with historical, cultural or architectural value within its urban renewal project areas.

alternative strategies and approaches adopted by other places to tackle problems and confront challenges that are similar to those faced by Hong Kong. Following the conduct of some preliminary research, the Panel may then consider undertaking a duty visit to gain first-hand information on such experiences. Members suggested that Amsterdam, Barcelona, Prague, London and Boston could be possible places for the studies. It was also considered that if a duty visit was found necessary, it should take place around the Easter holidays in 2008 to suitable places.

9. The Research and Library Services Division of the Secretariat has carried out preliminary research on the spatial planning and urban renewal in each of the above five cities. Some salient points are set out below --

Amsterdam

(a) The Amsterdam government takes the initiative for the programming and planning of spatial development. The land use and zoning plans are given substance and formulated by means of a series of joint decisions reached by the government with commercial parties, developers, architects and local citizens. As regards urban renewal, under a new national urban renewal policy promulgated in 2000, a long term development programme has been formulated for revitalization of the urban centres of the city.

Barcelona

(b) The Barcelona government plays a key role in formulating the spatial planning policy. A Metropolitan Master Plan of Barcelona was promulgated in 2003 in response to new economic and social challenges of the 21st Century. The urban renewal policy for the city emphasizes strong political and local leadership to drive the urban renewal process, and the Metropolitan Master Plan sets out the urban renewal projects to be implemented in the next five years.

Prague

(c) A Strategic Plan for Prague was formulated in 2001 to provide a vision for what Prague plans to achieve in spatial planning in the next 10 years. The basic strategic aim in spatial planning of Prague is the change-over from a monocentric to a polycentric city to achieve a more balanced use of all its territory. The city government plays a key role in formulating the urban renewal policy but consults various stakeholders in determining the best urban renewal option.

London

(d) The city-wide administrative authority of London published the London Plan in February 2004 following a series of consultations undertaken since 2001.   The London Plan seeks to integrate land use with infrastructure development, economic and social policies, and environmental protection matters.   In September 2002, a delegation of this Panel visited the sites of Docklands, Thames Gateway, Covent Garden and Paddington Waterside during its duty visit to study overseas experiences in town planning, urban renewal and heritage conservation.   Most of the development and urban renewal projects implemented at those sites are still ongoing.

Boston

(e) Boston is one of the historic, wealthy and influential cities in the United States.   The Boston Redevelopment Authority plays a key role in formulating the spatial planning policy and urban renewal policy for Boston.   One major feature of Boston's spatial planning is that many Boston residents use bicycles as one of the primary modes of transit and the city administration has plans to construct more cycle paths and bicycle parking spaces to encourage the use of bicycles.

10.   The fact sheets providing more detailed information on these places are in **Appendices I** to **V**.

The way forward

11.   Members are invited to decide whether the Panel should undertake a duty visit to any of the above five places; and if so decided, members are invited to consider whether the objective of the duty visit should be articulated in the following terms --

"To obtain first-hand information on how the relevant government and quasi-government agencies --

(a) initiate and manage changes in the townscape of their cities through town planning to meet prevailing and long-term social, economic and environmental needs and how they strive to build up community consensus in the planning process; and

(b)   formulate and update their urban renewal strategies and how they deliver the urban renewal projects to enhance the physical living environment of old districts and at the same time preserve the uniqueness and community networks of the localities concerned."

12.   Subject to members' decision on the above, the Secretariat will proceed with the preparatory work.   The House Committee's permission will be sought, in accordance with House Rule 22(v), for the Panel to undertake the duty visit.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
22 November 2007

<div align="right">**Appendix I**</div>

FACT SHEET

Overseas Duty Visit
Panel on Development

Spatial planning and urban renewal in Amsterdam

Table 1 – Basic information on Amsterdam

Basic facts	- Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands, and is located at the southern part of the North Holland Province. The city is better known for its historic port and the canals. - The city was founded in the late 12th century as a small fishing village, and has grown to become the largest city in the Netherlands, with an area of 166 km² and a population of 745 000 inhabitants. - Like other Dutch municipalities, the municipality of Amsterdam is governed by a mayor, aldermen and a municipal council. - During the 1960s, Amsterdam was faced with some difficult decisions. As economic activities in the historical city centre grew, more space was needed. One option was to extend the economic activities from the inner city into the so-called 19th-century quarters, where both housing and living conditions were relatively undesirable. This option of adopting the concept of concentric development was eventually discarded and Amsterdam opted for the model of 'clustered deconcentration' of economic activities. New economic development zones were planned along the western and southern sections of Amsterdam's ring roads and later also along the eastern line of the metro train. This development model has prevailed, although new developments reflect the demand for a better mix of economic activities and other functions, such as housing and public amenities.

Table 2 – Spatial planning in Amsterdam

Responsible authority	• Amsterdam Physical Planning Department.
Legislation	• National Planning Act and National Environmental Managing Act.
Major policy paper	• The Amsterdam Structure Plan 2003-2010 sets out the main thrust of the policy that the Amsterdam government plans to pursue with respect to the city's spatial and physical development. The land use and zoning plans of the city districts must comply with the requirements set out in the Structure Plan.
Spatial planning policy	• Amsterdam maintains tight control of spatial development and implements a leasehold system (i.e. the city land is not sold, but leased to the private sector), which results in the Amsterdam government owning about 80% of the city land. (About 20% of the city land was sold in the early 20th century.) The Amsterdam government states that the implementation of the leasehold system can effectively prevent land speculation and generate revenues for financing infrastructure projects. • As the Amsterdam government is empowered to amend the zoning plans, Amsterdam occupies a strong position in the spatial planning process. In some cases, the Amsterdam government may purchase the private city land from its owners, or develop those land parcels in collaboration with the owners. • The Amsterdam government takes the initiative for the programming and planning of spatial development. The land use and zoning plan is given substance and formulated by means of a series of joint decisions reached by the government with commercial parties, developers, architects and local citizens.

Table 3 – Urban renewal in Amsterdam

Responsible authorities	• Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, Amsterdam Physical Planning Department and Amsterdam Development Corporation.
Legislation	• Urban Renewal Act.
Urban renewal policy	• In 1997, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment formulated the Revitalizing Policy for Major Cities, which marked the beginning of a new integrated approach to urban renewal with an intent to provide cities with a new impulse.
	• To shape the physical aspect of revitalizing cities, a new national urban renewal policy was launched in January 2000. This policy addresses the urgency for reshaping inner cities, former industrial sites/harbours and post-war neighbourhoods.
	• Under this policy, the national government provides the cities with financial support for urban renewal, which is known as the Investment Budget for Urban Renewal. By formulating the Long Term Development Programme, the so-called G4 (four biggest cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Hague and Utrecht) and G26 (26 medium cities) have started the process of revitalizing their urban centres.
	• In Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Physical Planning Department and the Amsterdam Development Corporation work in cooperation with businesses, the district councils and representatives from other relevant parties to prepare the urban renewal programme of the city.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit

IJburg (spatial planning)
• IJburg is an archipelago where 18 000 dwellings are being built for more than 45 000 inhabitants.　IJburg has been planned as a self-contained district with its own shops, offices and schools.　This development project will be completed by 2015.
Zuidas (spatial planning)
• The approval of the Zuidas Masterplan in 1998 marked the start of the long-term development of a mixed-use area of high-quality offices (especially for international headquarters), public amenities and cultural facilities.　The international headquarters of ABN AMRO Bank and ING Group bank/insurers have already established themselves there, along with nationally and internationally oriented law firms.
ArenA Boulevard in Amsterdam Zuidoost (spatial planning)
• Together with the historic city centre and the Zuidas district, ArenA Boulevard in south-east Amsterdam is one of three districts designated as so-called "city cores".　These cores define the city's image as an international cultural, economic and tourist centre.　The ArenA Boulevard is currently undergoing major development work.   • The Amsterdam ArenA stadium (home of the Ajax Football Club), the Pathé ArenA multiplex cinema, the Heineken Music Hall, the Pepsi Stage, and a range of mega-stores, shopping centres, cafés and restaurants are built to attract tourists and local residents.
Cycle routes (spatial planning)
• About 75% of the Amsterdam inhabitants own one or more bicycles.　Cycling is considered as a sustainable mode of transport because it is healthy, environmentally friendly and cheap.　It takes up little space and the costs of constructing, managing and maintaining cycle facilities are relatively low.　The Amsterdam government encourages cycling through providing high-grade cycle paths and good parking facilities.　At present, there are more than 10 cycle routes in Amsterdam.
Nieuw West (urban renewal)
• The Nieuw West, also known as the western garden suburbs, is the first major residential area to be built after the Second World War.　It is the location for one of the biggest urban renewal operations ever carried out in the Netherlands. The renovation operation in Nieuw West is an integrated project aimed at improvement in three areas: social, economic and spatial.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit (cont'd)

Amsterdam-Noord (urban renewal)
• There are many construction projects undertaken for redeveloping the former Shell complex in Amsterdam-Noord in the northern part of the city.   More than 2 200 dwellings and 140 000 sq m of office premises, a technology centre and the Netherlands Film Museum are being built.

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<div align="right">**Appendix II**</div>

FACT SHEET

Overseas Duty Visit
Panel on Development

Spatial planning and urban renewal in Barcelona

Table 1 – Basic information on Barcelona

Basic facts	• Barcelona, the capital and most populous city of Catalonia and the second largest city in Spain, has an area of 101 km² and a population of 1.6 million. It is located at the Mediterranean coast, between the mouths of the rivers, Llobregat and Besòs.
	• Barcelona is a major economic centre, with one of Europe's principal Mediterranean ports. Founded as a Roman city, Barcelona was the capital of the Counts of Barcelona and the Crown of Aragon. Besieged several times during its history, Barcelona today is an important cultural centre and a major tourist destination, and has a rich cultural heritage. Particularly renowned are the architectural works of Antoni Gaudí and Lluís Domènech i Montaner that have been designated as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) world heritage sites.
	• Barcelona is governed by the Barcelona City Council, which comprises 41 councillors elected by universal suffrage. The Council is led by the Executive, which is chaired by the elected Mayor. The City Council has jurisdiction in the internal affairs of the Council, including municipal tax, urban planning, environment, housing and economic promotion.

Table 2 – Spatial planning in Barcelona

Responsible authority	• Deputy Mayor for Housing, Urban Planning and Council Internal Affairs.
Major policy paper	• The Metropolitan Master Plan of Barcelona published in 2003 in response to the new economic and social challenges of the 21st century. The Master Plan is an integral plan which establishes: (a) land classification categories such as urban land, development land and agricultural land; (b) the regulation of land uses and development density restrictions; and (c) a list of development programmes to be implemented.
Spatial planning policy	• Some of the guiding principles of the spatial planning policy include: (a) The city government plays a key role in formulating the spatial planning policy. Commercial enterprises, professional associations, advisory bodies, social entities and citizens are consulted to determine the best spatial planning option for Barcelona. In many cases, the city government co-works with the private sector to implement large urban development projects. (b) International events such as the 1992 Olympic Games are used to enhance prestige, attract private investment, and focus and motivate the city's workforce. Buildings and infrastructures constructed for the events are of high quality and serve a double purpose: for short-term use during the events and as a means of regenerating a decaying area of the city in the long-term. (c) Public building locations are carefully planned to enhance city development and prevent duplication. (d) Innovative architectures and thinking are encouraged. (e) The city government invests in transport infrastructures to improve accessibility, thus enhancing economic and social activities.

Table 3 – Urban renewal in Barcelona

Responsible authority	• Deputy Mayor for Housing, Urban Planning and Council Internal Affairs.
Major policy paper	• The Metropolitan Master Plan sets out a list of urban renewal projects to be implemented in the next five years.
Urban renewal policy	• Some of the guiding principles of the urban renewal policy include: (a) emphasizing strong political and local leadership to drive the urban renewal process; (b) providing tax incentives and grants to refurbish properties; (c) conserving buildings of heritage value for public uses such as schools, libraries and cultural centres; (d) using public funds to renovate historic buildings which are in poor condition; and (e) completing building renovations to a high standard, both interior and exterior.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit

La Rambla (spatial planning)
• La Rambla is the best known landmark of Barcelona. Connecting the Plaça Catalunya to the Columbus monument and filling with opera houses, cafés, kiosks, and flower and animal stalls, La Rambla is one of the favourable destinations for both tourists and local people.
Universal Forum of Cultures (spatial planning)
• The Universal Forum of Cultures was a 141-day international event that took place in Barcelona from 9 May to 26 September 2004. The venue is now home to several massive events around the year, including the Primavera Sound Festival and the La Mercè concerts.
Port Vell (urban renewal)
• Before the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, the Port Vell, the city's old obsolete harbour was a run down area with empty warehouses, industrial buildings, refuse dumps and railroad yards. In one of the most drastic urban renewal projects, the area was transformed into a yacht basin and entertainment centre, opening the city up to the sea. A coastal road was moved underground, and a pedestrian street now stretches from the Columbus monument to the suburban area of Barcelona.
22@Barcelona (urban renewal)
• 22@Barcelona is a project that aims to fully integrate Barcelona in the new technological revolution of the knowledge economy. The Poblenou district, the main hub of Spanish industrialization during the 19th century, has become the leading economic and technological platform in Barcelona and Catalonia.
Diagonal Mar (urban renewal)
• The Diagonal Mar is a large urban redevelopment project centred around Barcelona's Avenue Diagonal. The district consists of residential areas, three office buildings, hotels, a shopping complex, a convention centre and a 35-acre public park, making it attractive to tourists and local citizens.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit (cont'd)

Santa Caterina market (urban renewal)
• The Santa Caterina market, which is located at the centre of an old neighbourhood carrying the same name, is a covered retail marketplace which houses restaurants and vendor booths. One of the attractions of the Santa Caterina market is the roof, which is conceived as a curved and light surface that floats on a set of cables. Its outer surface is formed by colourful ceramic mosaics.

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Appendix III

FACT SHEET

Overseas Duty Visit
Panel on Development

Spatial planning and urban renewal in Prague

Table 1 – Basic information on Prague

Basic facts	• Prague, spanning an area of 496 km² and housing a population of over 1.2 million, is the capital and the largest city of the Czech Republic. Situated on the River Vltava in central Bohemia, Prague has been the political, cultural, and economic centre of the Czech state for over 1 100 years.
	• Prague is considered as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe and is among the most visited cities on the continent. Since 1992, the historic centre of Prague has been included in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) world heritage sites.
	• Prague is governed by the Prague City Council, with its members being elected by universal suffrage. The Council is led by the Executive, which is chaired by the elected Mayor. For administrative purpose, Prague is divided into 22 districts which possess individual district councils.

Table 2 – Spatial planning in Prague

Responsible authority	• City Development Authority of Prague.
Legislation	• Spatial Planning Act.
Major policy paper	• Strategic Plan for Prague.
Spatial planning policy	• The Strategic Plan for Prague was formulated in 2001, providing a vision of what Prague plans to achieve in spatial planning in the next 10 years. Although Prague has a master plan which guides the development of Prague, it does not determine what will be built, but rather what can be built. • The basic strategic aim in spatial planning of Prague is the change-over from a monocentric to a polycentric city. In particular, Prague emphasizes the need to alleviate the demand for city centre and make more balanced use of all its territory. Some of the guiding principles of the spatial planning policy are: (a) regulate the use of land and building; (b) regulate the proportion between built-up and green areas to avoid the spilling over of construction into green areas; (c) avoid intensive building work on slopes or valleys, cultivate green areas and gradually integrate them into the surrounding environment; (d) require that new construction projects meet high architectonic standards which are important to the city's development; (e) conduct public consultation before implementing any large construction projects; and (f) encourage the use of public places.

Table 3 – Urban renewal in Prague

Responsible authority	• City Development Authority of Prague.
Legislation	• Strategic Plan for Prague.
Urban renewal policy	• Some of the guiding principles of the urban renewal policy are: (a) The city government plays a key role in formulating the urban renewal policy. Commercial enterprises, professional associations and citizens are consulted to determine the best urban renewal option. In many cases, the city government co-works with the private sector to implement large urban redevelopment projects. (b) The city government may sell the land to foreign developers for redevelopment purpose. (c) The city government develops good transport infrastructures and regenerates green spaces to improve the living environment. (d) The city government employs world-class architecture firms to carry out large urban redevelopment projects.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit

Western City (spatial planning)
• It is a municipal district with a total area of over 1 300 hectares and more than 50 000 residents. About 680 hectares of land are zoned for residential development, and more than 9 000 dwellings have been built. In addition, there are schools, shopping centres and a park.
Kampus Park (spatial planning)
• Kampus Park is located at district 11 in the southern part of the city, 20 minutes from the city centre. New modern detached houses, office buildings, shopping centres, hotels, leisure premises, restaurants, a public park and a cultural centre have been built.
Cycle paths (spatial planning)
• There are 185 km cycle paths in Prague. Approximately 63 km of those cycle paths are reserved for cyclists in parks, orchards and newly constructed roads. The Prague government plans to extend the cycle paths to 450 km.
Žižkov (urban renewal)
• Žižkov is currently undergoing urban renewal work, with many older dilapidated buildings being reconstructed and restored. Due to its unique historical background, Žižkov is now the Bohemian part of Prague, with many artists living and performing there.
Wenceslas Square (urban renewal)
• The Prague government started redeveloping the Wenceslas Square in the 1980s. The Wenceslas Square has become the centre of the business and cultural communities in the New Town of Prague, housing many hotels, offices, retail stores, restaurants and currency exchange booths.
Smíchov (urban renewal)
• Smíchov is located at the left bank of the river Vltava. In the 1990s, the Prague government began co-working with private companies to demolish old industrial buildings and build a hypermarket, two multiplex cinemas, two hotels and several commercial premises.

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Appendix IV

FACT SHEET

Overseas Duty Visit
Panel on Development

Spatial planning and urban renewal in London

Table 1 – Basic information on London

Basic facts	- London, the capital of the United Kingdom (UK), has an area of 1 578 km² and a population of 7.5 million. London is one of the world's leading business, financial and cultural centres. - The administration of London takes place in two tiers – a city-wide, strategic tier and a local tier. City-wide administration is carried out by the Greater London Authority (GLA), while district-level administration is taken up by 33 local authorities, comprising the City of London and 32 London boroughs. - GLA consists of two elected parts – the Mayor of London, who has executive powers, and the London Assembly, which scrutinizes the Mayor's decisions and can accept or reject his/her annual budget proposal. - GLA is responsible for formulating the overall policies on spatial planning, urban renewal, transport and economic development.

Table 2 – Spatial planning in London

Responsible authorities	• GLA and local planning authorities.
Legislation	• Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
Major policy paper	• In 2001, GLA published a consultation paper on spatial planning strategy entitled "Towards the London Plan". The plan integrates land use with infrastructure development, economic and social policies, and environmental protection matters. • A draft London Plan was published in 2002. GLA appointed a panel to assess the plan. After a series of assessments and public consultations, GLA published the London Plan in February 2004. Since then, the London Plan has been amended several times and is subject to further revision. • The objectives of the London Plan include: (a) accommodating London's growth within its boundaries without encroaching on open spaces; (b) making London a better city for people to live in; (c) making London a more prosperous city with strong and diverse economic growth; (d) improving London's accessibility; and (e) enhancing London's image as a more attractive, well-designed and green city.
Spatial planning policy	• In London, the City Corporation of London and the 32 borough councils are the local planning authorities for their responsible areas. Under the Greater London Authority Act 1999, the local planning authorities are required to consult the Mayor on strategic planning applications. The Act also empowers the Mayor to direct the local planning authorities by means of rejecting their strategic planning applications. However, the Mayor does not have the powers to approve strategic planning applications, which belong to the local planning authorities only.

Table 3 – Urban renewal in London

Responsible authorities	• GLA, local planning authorities and urban regeneration companies.
Legislation	• Housing, Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and Regional Development Agencies Act 1998.
Urban renewal policy	• GLA works with local planning authorities to formulate urban renewal programmes which promote sustainable regeneration. In many cases, urban regeneration companies, which are independent companies established by national and regional regeneration agencies, the relevant local planning authorities, the private sector and other key partners, are set up to implement the redevelopment projects.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit[1]

Docklands (spatial planning and urban renewal)

• The Docklands is an area in the east of London, comprising parts of several boroughs such as Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Globe Town, Newham and Greenwich. The eponymous docks were formerly part of the Port of London, at one time the world's largest port.
 	
 • In 1981, the UK government established a statutory body called the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) to redevelop the area. The massive development programme managed by LDDC during the 1980s and 1990s saw a huge area of the Docklands converted into a mixture of residential, commercial and light industrial space.
 	
 • Among the redevelopment projects, an important one is the redevelopment of Canary Wharf, which currently contains the UK's three tallest buildings: the Canary Wharf Tower, the 8 Canada Square and the Citigroup Centre.
 	
 • The success of the Docklands redevelopment has prompted a number of further development schemes, including:
 	
    (a) extending the Docklands Light Railway to Woolwich and possibly Dagenham;
 	
    (b) building new railway lines between Canary Wharf, central London and north Kent;
 	
    (c) redeveloping Blackwall Basin and Wood Wharf; and
 	
    (d) redeveloping the Royal Docks area, including the Silvertown Quays project.

East End (spatial planning and urban renewal)
• The East End refers to the east of the medieval walled City of London and north of the River Thames. The 2012 Olympic Games will be held in the Olympic Park located at the East End, created on former industrial land around the River Lea. It is intended that the related redevelopment should leave a legacy of new sports facilities, housing, industrial and technical infrastructure, that will further help regenerate the area.

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[1] In September 2002, the delegation of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works to study the experiences of town planning, urban renewal and heritage preservation in Singapore, Berlin and London visited the sites of Docklands, Thames Gateway, Covent Garden and Paddington Waterside during its duty visit.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit (cont'd)

Thames Gateway (spatial planning and urban renewal)
• The Thames Gateway is an area of land stretching eastwards from East London on both sides of the River Thames and the Thames Estuary. The area, which includes brownfields (abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contaminations), has been designated a national priority for urban redevelopment. The redevelopment of the Thames Gateway is seen as a long-term, market-led project, with completion set around 2020.   • The planning framework principles for the Thames Gateway are: (a) making the most of the Thames Gateway opportunity – developments will be encouraged where they make best use of the area's strengths and resources for growth and regeneration, including its huge sites;   (b) creating a vibrant and sustainable pattern of communities – the aim is for new developments to provide a mix of employment, housing and activities needed for thriving communities, minimizing the need for travel, and taking full account of the existing pattern of development;   (c) relating transport opportunity and land use opportunity – the Thames Gateway can provide a practical example of the application of principles of sustainable development, with less need to travel and less reliance on cars; making the most of transport facilities, including public transport already in place or planned; and   (d) bringing life to the river and river-front – much of the Thames Gateway has a water-frontage. The river is a valuable resource for transport, amenity and environmental benefits.
Covent Garden (spatial planning and urban renewal)
• Covent Garden is a district which is dominated by shops, street performers and entertainment facilities such as the Royal Opera House. From the perspective of urban planning, Covent Garden has been quoted as an example of involving minimal infrastructure developments to re-develop the Central Market into a vibrant area with a well-established local community economy.   • In August 2007, Covent Garden launched the UK's first ever food night market selling fresh produce/food products such as cheeses, mushroom sandwiches, candies and pork sausages. The aim of the night market is to bring Covent Garden back to its roots as the Larder of London. Organizers plan to make it a permanent event in 2008 as part of a wider initiative to regenerate interest in the Covent Garden area.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit (cont'd)

Paddington Waterside (spatial planning and urban renewal)
• Paddington Waterside is a mixed residential and business development, situated adjacent to Paddington station and the Paddington branch of the Grand Union Canal. It is being developed on the site of the Great Western Railway's original London passenger terminus. New hotels, offices, shopping centres, restaurants, healthcare premises and leisure facilities have been built in this area.
Waterloo (spatial planning and urban renewal)

• Waterloo, located at the borough of Lambeth, is a major railway station and transport interchange complex in London.
 	
 • In October 2007, GLA published the "Waterloo Opportunity Area Planning Framework", which is a blueprint for sustainable redevelopment in the area over the coming decades, bringing in thousands of new homes and jobs and placing an emphasis on the importance of outstanding architecture design.
 	
 • GLA has made the following proposals for redeveloping Waterloo:
 	
   (a) creating an attractive new city square which will attract local people and visitors to gather;
 	
   (b) encouraging the development of new world-class buildings around and above the railway station; and
 	
   (c) improving the accessibility and capacity of the railway station and redefining it as a new centre for the area.

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Appendix V

FACT SHEET

Overseas Duty Visit
Panel on Development

Spatial planning and urban renewal in Boston

Table 1 – Basic information on Boston

Basic facts	• Boston, the capital of the state of Massachusetts and the largest city in the New England region, is one of the historic, wealthy and influential cities in the United States (US). Boston has an area of 125 km² and a population of 600 000. It lies at the centre of the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy metropolitan area – the 11th-largest metropolitan area in the US, which has a population of 4.4 million.
	• As regards the governance structure, Boston implements a mayor-council system in which the mayor is vested with extensive executive powers. The mayor is elected to a four-year term by universal suffrage. The city council, which has 13 members, is elected every two years.
	• In addition to the city government, numerous state authorities and commissions play a role in the politics of Boston, including the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Massachusetts Port Authority.

Table 2 – Spatial planning in Boston

Responsible authority	• Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA).
Legislation	• Housing and Urban Redevelopment Act and Urban Redevelopment Corporations Act.
Spatial planning policy	• BRA plays a key role in formulating the spatial planning policy in Boston. Some of BRA's responsibilities are: (a) co-working with developers, businesses and citizens to formulate master spatial plans that address the city's needs for infrastructure and community economic development; (b) approving development projects; (c) acquiring, selling and leasing real estate to achieve economic redevelopment and to promote public policy objectives, such as encouraging growth industries and implementing appropriate land use policies; (d) owning real estate throughout the city and selling any such property when an attractive plan for the use of the property is submitted and approved; (e) issuing bonds and notes to finance the development projects; and (f) granting tax concession to encourage commercial and residential development, if necessary.

Table 3 – Urban renewal in Boston

Responsible authority	• BRA.
Legislation	• Housing and Urban Redevelopment Act and Urban Redevelopment Corporations Act.
Urban renewal policy	• Some of the guiding principles of the urban renewal policy include: (a) BRA plays an important role in formulating the urban renewal policy. Commercial enterprises, professional associations and local citizens are consulted to determine the best urban renewal option. In many cases, BRA co-works with the private sector to implement large urban redevelopment projects. (b) BRA may sell land to developers for redevelopment purpose. (c) After evaluating the social benefits, BRA determines the priority of implementing urban renewal projects. (d) BRA develops good transport infrastructures and regenerates green spaces to improve the living environment.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit

John Fitzgerald Expressway/Tunnel Project (spatial planning)
• The John Fitzgerald Expressway/Tunnel Project is a mega-project rerouting the John Fitzgerald Expressway, the main highway through the heart of Boston into a 5.6 km tunnel under the city.   The project also includes the construction of the Ted Williams Tunnel, the Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge and the Rose Kennedy Greenway.   The John Fitzgerald Expressway/Tunnel Project is the most expensive highway project in the US, which costs over US$14.6 billion.

Back Bay (spatial planning)
• Back Bay is an upscale residential, retail, and commercial office district. Within the district, Newbury Street, Boylston Street and Commonwealth Avenue are lined with unique shops, trendy restaurants and vintage homes, making Back Bay a fashionable destination for Boston residents and visitors. • Architecturally, Back Bay is dominated by Victorian brownstone buildings in its northern, more residential portion; the southern part of Back Bay is far more commercial and is home to some of Boston's tallest skyscrapers such as the Prudential Tower and the John Hancock Tower.

Boston Harbour Islands National Recreation Area (spatial planning)
• The Boston Harbour Islands National Recreation Area is made up of a collection of islands near the harbour, many of which are open for public recreation and some of which are very small and best suited for wildlife.   The area is managed by the Boston Harbour Islands Partnership. • Attractions of this recreation area include hiking trails, beaches, the Civil War-era Fort Warren on Georges Island and Boston Light on Little Brewster Island, one of the oldest lighthouses in the US.   Georges Island and Spectacle Island are served seasonally by ferries to and from Boston and Quincy, connecting on weekends and summer weekdays with a shuttle boat to several other islands.

Cycle paths (spatial planning)
• Many Boston residents use bicycles as one of the primary modes of transit, and Boston's small size and relative flatness make cycling an appealing way to get around.   The mayor has plans to construct more cycle paths and bicycle parking spaces to encourage the use of bicycles.   Among the cycle paths in Boston, the eleven mile Minuteman Bikeway is the most famous one.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit (cont'd)

Government Center (urban renewal)
• Boston has built an entirely new development on top of old Scollay Square, bounded by Cambridge, Court, Congress and Sudbury Streets, and renamed the area Government Center.   Government Center is often used for large outdoor urban events, including free concerts in the summer and a large Santa's Workshop display in the winter.   The centrepiece of Government Center is the Boston City Hall.

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