



## Strategy: linking the issues

### **land, economy, housing, environment, health are all linked (one-page version)**

The relationships linking and explaining most of the planning issues on which Just Space member groups are insisting on change are the ownership, development and taxation of land.

The UK is often described nowadays as a '**rentier economy**': one dominated by the extraction of rents and profits from the ownership of assets —land, property, intellectual and financial assets.

Growing amounts of savings and investment (including investments from abroad) flow in to the ownership and development of land and buildings including especially our housing stock, **pushing up the market values** of what have become financial assets rather than homes to live in.

London is a very extreme agglomeration of business, cultural, educational and government activity. The **growth** of this activity has been a main aim of London planning since at least 2000, sucking in migrants from other regions and abroad and securing massive public investment in transport and other infrastructure to enable it. This all further inflates land values and house prices. It fuels regional and class inequalities and thus health inequalities.

### ***What are the linked issues?***

- A scale of demolition and replacement of the built environment which is unsustainable.
- High housing costs for the population which cancel out superficially high average incomes.
- Since wages for much of the population are low and have fallen in real terms, massive subsidies to landlords have been needed so people can pay their rents. Even with that, many can't, and evictions and homelessness mount. Coping (even badly) with homelessness drives borough councils towards bankruptcy and many homeless families are forced in to temporary accommodation, often far from home and sometimes in other regions.
- The escalation of land, housing and property values should make London a well-resourced city but most of the growth is gathered as private wealth of owner-occupiers and corporations: the tax base is relatively static and we have no adequate way to capture this value to run public services, pay for infrastructure or council housing, the need for which escalates while the stock shrinks.
- Successive plans have tried to maximise housing production and this imperative distorts the Plan: owners are incentivised to switch shops, offices, industries, community spaces, open space and almost every other use of land into speculative housing. Many of the constraints on this process have been relaxed either by central government (use classes, permitted development) or by the GLA (density and high buildings policy).
- The process of making and implementing public plans is dominated by real estate and business interests with citizens having minimal influence and often being treated with contempt or disregard by officials and councillors, especially in the "Opportunity Areas" where physical development is most concentrated.
- All planning decisions are subordinated to 'viability' for developers and landowners, guaranteeing their excessive profits.