

London Government Dinner

Egyptian Hall, Mansion House

Monday 30th May 2022

The Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Vincent Keaveny

My Lord Lieutenant, my lord, fellow aldermen, Sheriffs, Mr Recorder, Chief Commoner, Mr Mayor, your worships, ladies and gentlemen...

Good evening and welcome to Mansion House for the London Government Dinner – the first such dinner we have been able to hold since 2020.

This is an important event for us in the City, where we bring together the leaders, mayors and chief executives from across the whole of our great capital, together with our friends in the Greater London Authority and Parliament...

...Underlining how the City of London is not an island, but is very much part of one united London.

A warm welcome to you all, and congratulations to all of you here who are newly elected!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Catherine McGuinness, who has just come to the end of her term as Policy Chair of the City of London, and has also served as a vice chair of London Councils throughout that time – thank you Catherine!

And I would like to congratulate and welcome our new Policy Chairman Chris Hayward,
who will be working with many of you here in the years ahead – I look forward to supporting you in Standing up for the City...

And supporting your vision of Destination City - ensuring this Square Mile continues to improve as a world-leading and welcoming destination.

In other words, somewhere to rest and play as well as work!

This is about more than the Square Mile – we want to help all of London attract even more visitors – as the destination city of choice.

I am delighted that we are joined by the Chair of London Councils, Councillor Georgia Gould, and by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan –

Sadiq, I hope you are enjoying your new base in the East End, and that we will continue to see your baseball skills in action – although maybe not this evening.

Councillor Gould, this is the first time we have been able to welcome you to the London Government Dinner.

You were elected as Chair of London Councils during an extremely difficult time – and you deserve credit for your leadership.

During that dark period – perhaps London's darkest hour since the Second World War –

I was proud of how the different parts of London government
- the GLA, the boroughs, the London Resilience Forum
– pulled together for the good of all Londoners, to meet the challenges of Covid.

I would like to thank all those in London government for all they did to support people, to protect people and to keep London going.

Thanks in no small part to your efforts, London pulled through it.

I hope we can keep that spirit of unity alive as we work together to meet the next challenge - supporting London's economic recovery, through what is undoubtedly a difficult time for many Londoners, and indeed the whole country.

We in the City look forward to continuing to work with our partners across London...

...In initiatives such as Skills for a Sustainable Skyline, where we are working with the GLA and Central London Forward to develop green skills in the commercial built environment sector to help London reach net zero...

... and in the work of the City Bridge Trust, which gives charitable grants for projects in every single borough.

The City of London will be there to support the whole capital in the tough times ahead.

London succeeds when we pull together as one capital city.

And when we pull together as a country.

Not when we use the words 'London' or 'metropolitan' as though they were an insult.

So when we talk about "levelling up", let's make sure this includes levelling up across London, rather than against London.

As my most famous processor as Lord Mayor, Dick Whittington, discovered, the streets of London are not all paved with gold.

They are much more special than that.

It is the people of London who give the capital its greatness.

Our success is as a place where people can come together to create, to innovate, and to succeed.

This is what drew me to London when I first arrived here from Dublin.

Little did I expect one day to become Lord Mayor, but the fact that I did is a symbol of what an open and welcoming place London is.

This is why when I became Lord Mayor I chose as my theme 'People and Purpose, for a people-focused and purpose-driven City.'

I am passionate about championing social mobility at all levels – as I know many of you are.

And earlier this month, we launched a new membership body: Progress Together – the first of its kind, ensuring financial services firms enable people from all socio-economic backgrounds to progress in their careers on an equal footing.

Why is this important now?

Because the success of the businesses here rests on the talent and hard work of people from across London and beyond.

When I travel overseas to promote trade and investment in UK financial and professional services, I find – and I am sure that the Mayor finds this too – people look to London as a world leader.

Which it is, especially when it comes to finding the solutions to climate change, cyber security and many other challenges.

London is one of the UK's strongest assets – anything which holds London back, holds the UK back.

Whereas a strong London underpins a strong UK.

Which is why I am so glad to see dramatic improvements to London's transport infrastructure and connectivity, such as the Elizabeth Line - which the City Corporation has backed since its inception and has contributed £200million towards.

It was great to see the line opened by Her Majesty the Queen just in time for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations!

As well as being an important milestone in our nation's history, and a time for unity and joy,
I hope this week's celebrations in the capital will also mark an important milestone in London's recovery
– something which everyone here has a role in.

Thank you all, for all that you do for London.