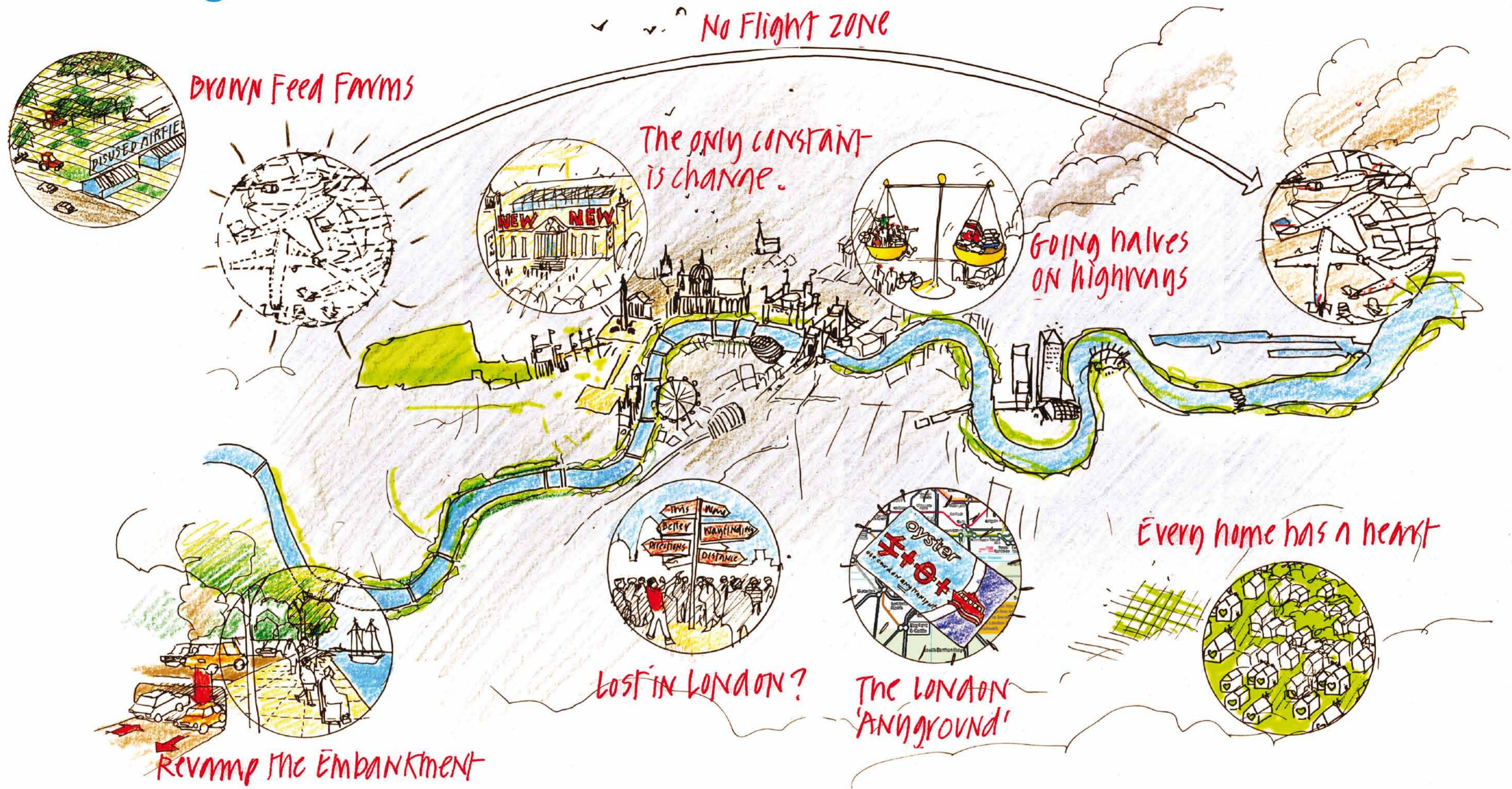


# If I could design London I would...



## No flight zone

No other modern, civilised city has planes flying low over residential areas. With around 1,184 flights each day, peaking between 5 and 7pm, Londoners are blighted by aircraft noise. To redress this, studies should be initiated into moving Heathrow from its current location to the Thames Estuary, which would halt its further expansion and the displacement of yet more villages.

## Brown 'feed' farms

London has just over 3,000 hectares of brownfield land and the London Development Agency owns around 10 percent of this. Developing these sites would protect the greenbelt and regenerate parts of the city. Battersea Power Station could be reinvented as an urban farm with tiers of plants and vegetables. This is not without precedent – the 'victory gardens' that boosted morale and contributed to the civil effort during World War I and World War II were planted in backyards, on rooftops and even commandeered vacant plots.

## Every home has a green heart

"Greening" the existing housing stock would constitute change on a micro-level that has an impact on a potentially massive scale. Sixty percent of the Capital's housing was built before 1945 and many people live in inefficient, draughty Victorian structures that guzzle energy during the winter. In parallel, every home could have a tree – literally. Trees mark districts, humanise austere developments and provide both the city and individual homes with natural shade and beauty.

## Lost in London?

After being shown a walking map, 66% of travellers said they would consider walking instead, thus relieving overcrowding on the transport network. Currently, fewer than 1 in 25 people claim to use street signs to help them navigate central London and thirty-two separate way-finding systems within the Congestion Charging Zone have been identified. An integrated system would need to draw from these to establish a coherent wayfinding system.

## Going halves on the highways

Oxford Street is a congested corridor, filled with buses and unpleasant for pedestrians. What if buses were banished to depots at each end and electric shuttles sped along its length? Current statistics suggest that only 2% of Londoners cycle each day – though this has increased by 83 percent since 2000. London could be greener and faster, if were it safer. To achieve this we need to strike a better balance between two legs, two wheels and the mighty engine – and we could start with Oxford Street.

## The only constant is change

Restoring the views through and across the capital and celebrating the historic splendour and post-war diversity of London's architecture need not conflict with the continuum of change. The existing building stock could be recycled wherever possible. The layers of history could be appreciated more clearly when seen through the lens of the new.

## London Anyground

How will the existing overland network cope with the predicted 40% increase in demand for rail services over the next fifteen years? We might challenge the assumption that transport needs to run underground to be useful. When the mainline stations of South London are linked to the tube network, they almost mirror the web of North London's tube links and dispel the myth that the south is the poorly connected. Even the river could be integrated into a wider "Oyster Zone".

## Revamp the Embankment

The walking routes along the South Bank have been a great success and there is now an opportunity to integrate the north bank. A new landscape of dedicated cycling and pedestrian routes could run in parallel to discreet, sunken roads, with a zigzagging route across London's bridges to establish an integrated walking route that unites the city.