**Lyn Garner:**

This is the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Podcast.

**Speaker 2:**

It's a true legacy. It's stuff is being used. That's the bottom line of it.

**Speaker 3:**

People are moving here to be in Stratford, to be near the park and because of the transport connections and things like that.

**Speaker 4:**

The park continues to develop. Habitats are constantly changing. We're seeing the biodiversity change with it.

**Sadiq Khan:**

The joy of the East Bank is we're making sure plugged into the DNA of this part of London are these wonderful institutions.

**Lyn Garner:**

I'm Lyn Garner, Chief Executive for London Legacy Development Corporation. We've seen another busy 12 months at the park and there's far more to come in 2024. In this episode, I'm being joined by the chair of LLDC, Lord Peter Hendy.

**Lyn Garner:**

Hi Peter.

**Peter Hendy:**

Hi Lyn.

**Lyn Garner:**

And it has been a busy year, hasn't it?

**Peter Hendy:**

It's been extraordinary again.

**Lyn Garner:**

We've seen so much happening. It's probably been the busiest year in the London Stadium. Couple of concerts, couple of weeks of Major League baseball in the stadium, international athletics back after quite a long time actually, and really successful. 50,000 tickets sold for international athletics, which was wonderful. And now back to football.

**Peter Hendy:**

And the thing that really strikes me now whenever you come here is that we're going to go on and talk about East Bank, but with loads... Thousands of students here, suddenly everywhere in the park looks busy all the time, which is fabulous.

**Lyn Garner:**

Oh, totally. We had two wonderful community events, The Great Get Together and the East Summer School, which just really appeals to thousands of local people who are coming in and making the park their own. We will talk about East Bank because those buildings are open to the public. What do you think of it?

**Peter Hendy:**

I think it's brilliant. And as between you and I and the great people at LLDC, they've been working very hard to build those buildings, but none of that matters when they're open, both the UCL campus, UCL East and the London College of Fashion UAL, they are open. There are parts of them, both of them are open to the public. You can go in there for a cup of coffee, but they are architectural wonders. They're really exciting inside. They're purpose-built for the student population, the teaching that's going to go on there.

**Peter Hendy:**

But actually, the people coming here, it's just wonderful, isn't it? Actually, the whole place is a buzz full of young people and they're going to be here every year for the remaining life of the park. It's fabulous.

**Lyn Garner:**

That's right. And so, in total, I think there are 10,000 students coming to the two campuses already. So 4,000 at UCL, University College London, and 6,000 at the London College of Fashion. It's amazing.

**Peter Hendy:**

And I explain to people about UCL, that this campus is in effect going to be as big as their campus at Bloomsbury. So if you are used to seeing UCL students in Bloomsbury, then there's another lot the same number coming here. I think it's going to make a huge difference to the vibrancy of the park and actually to the businesses on it.

**Peter Hendy:**

And of course, that's not all that's coming because we're now talking about the Sadler's Wells building is in its last stages. The V&A building is in its last stages. The BBC will be the last one to open, I think because of the complexity of the building. But those cultural institutions will bring yet more visitors to the park.

**Peter Hendy:**

And for local people, having Sadler's Wells doing hip hop, having the BBC there, having a branch of the V&A, which is opening with exhibition is going to be just fantastic, isn't it? If you live in anywhere in East London, you've suddenly got three new brilliant cultural spaces to explore.

**Lyn Garner:**

I think alongside that exhibition though, Music is Black, we heard a few weeks ago about the exhibition that's going to be at the storehouse, V&A Storehouse, which is over on the Here East side of the park. And that is an exhibition featuring The David Bowie Centre for the Study of Performing Arts. So I think that's going to be amazing and will be a huge draw.

**Peter Hendy:**

Well, I don't think enough people yet understand that the V&A is coming with the building on East Bank, but it's also coming, as you say, with the East Storehouse at Here East. And I think people are going to discover that actually there's too much here just for a day visit, that you're going to have to come back and come back again. And as their programmes change, people will keep coming back.

**Peter Hendy:**

Even though I know all about the buildings and what we've planned for them, I can't help feeling that we're underestimating the effect of those cultural and educational institutions on local people and on the economy and the opportunities for people in East London. And if we have underestimated it, then that's really good actually, because we want everybody who's within hailing distance of the park to regard it both as an opportunity for them and actually something which will enrich them both financially and culturally as well.

**Lyn Garner:**

I think that's right. The original business case predicted one and a half million new visitors. I think it's just going to be hugely more popular than that. But really, what's more important is how appealing it is to local people. So the public realm in front of the buildings at Stratford Waterfront are going to be used 365 days a year for performances that people can come along and watch for free and take part in, so on. And that is built into the conditions of the leases that the occupiers have taken, that they have to really reach out of their own buildings, join with the other occupiers, and make use of the performing space in the park.

**Peter Hendy:**

Sure. Well, we know it's going to be win-win because these people weren't forced to come. They volunteered to come. And when they volunteered to come, they understood that the purpose of bringing them here was to have an impact on East London and East Londoners. And I'm sure like you, I'm very satisfied with seeing what they've done already in the local community with local schools and local people, that actually that will be fulfilled. Apprenticeships, bringing kids in, reaching out to schools and people, they've done that already. So when the cultural attractions actually open, it's going to be another uplift to a programme that each of them is already subscribing to.

**Lyn Garner:**

Absolutely. But when we think about construction, Peter, we've done a lot on housing this year as well. I don't know if you've noticed, but phase two of Eastwick is coming out of the ground, which is the site that's just opposite Here East, just in front of Here East, actually. And it's going great guns there, that second phase of Eastwick. But we are facing really challenging conditions this year in terms of housing.

**Peter Hendy:**

Well, you and I have just had a board meeting at which we've contemplated the effects, not of any decisions about the park, but national decisions about the consequences of the terrible Grenfell fire and also inflation and other financial difficulties. But you and I both know that actually the LLDC is continuing to work through what we need to do to deliver putting Mill Lane and Stratford Waterfront and Rick Roberts Way, and we'll work with the mayor to make sure that actually we are going to deliver those things because it's important. It's important to finish off the part and deliver the housing that everybody intended it to have.

**Lyn Garner:**

And the good thing about those sites that are still left to be built out is this is where we will be providing 50% affordable housing. So they're critical to completing the project really well.

**Peter Hendy:**

We probably ought to get onto jobs, where actually the LLDC has had since the beginning, a real commitment to employing local people, giving them training, having a legacy which enables people to get a route into employment. And I think we've had another good year, haven't we, actually working together with our partners and local authorities to deliver more opportunities for people.

**Lyn Garner:**

Yeah, there's a couple of highlights really this year. So just a couple of weeks ago, the Mayor of London was on the park. He went to the London Stadium to announce this year's London living wage increase. So it makes me feel quite proud actually that we're able to offer that across the park.

**Lyn Garner:**

But we've also done some really important work with the East Bank partners, just returning to East Bank for a moment. We've launched a scheme, it's called New Talent Future Leaders Programme. It's worth 1.3 million and it's supporting people to help provide roots into employment for young creatives. And that is being hosted by the East Bank partners. It runs through the Good Growth Hub, which is a physical building on the park on the Hackney side and is channelling young creatives into potential opportunities with these bank partners in these buildings. So across both university campuses and into the cultural buildings as well.

**Peter Hendy:**

And we've also got Build East. So the construction industry has built the park, but we've also created the opportunity of people joining the construction industry, which is another career route for people.

**Lyn Garner:**

It is a joint venture with TFL, and that's great because it's got long-term sustainability into the future. TFL have a huge number of construction sites that they're bringing forward for development, which means that people who are getting engaged at Build East have a potential career trajectory into construction for many, many years.

We're starting to focus at Build East on green skills now around decarbonization in several different industries. So that's a new kind of string to the bow of Build East. And later on, on the particular site where Build East is we'll be building homes there. And so, the facility itself is destined to move on to the royal docks and will be looked after by TFL. So it has a really strong future.

**Peter Hendy:**

Brilliant. Well, talking of TFL, you and I have both been engaged recently in looking at Stratford Station and what we can do. And I think that, well, actually I've seen it because I was there. I've been there several times in the past few days. The TFL has started building the new entrance to Stratford Station from Carpenter's Estate, haven't they?

**Lyn Garner:**

Oh, yeah. It's fantastic. So eight million pounds is being spent on this. The money's coming from Newham, from Transport for London and from the GLA itself. And it will just mean that where the Jubilee line is on that side of the station, people will be able to stroll in from the Carpenter's Estate side, which I think will make a huge difference. But the station itself is under huge pressure. It's one of the busiest stations in the country and it's seen huge growth in its passenger numbers.

**Lyn Garner:**

So can you believe that in 2006 there were just 40 million passenger movements and in 2019, 128 million? That's a 60% increase in passenger movements in such a short period of time. It just reminds you that when we were predicting growth for this part of London, we were really understating it. It's been hugely successful.

**Peter Hendy:**

Yeah. In my other job in Network Rail, it's a really brilliant demonstration of what transport connectivity does for economic growth, jobs and housing.

**Lyn Garner:**

That's right. It's critical for future inward investment, actually. And it reminds me of the evolution of LLDC that's taking place in April, 2025 because we will have responsibility from April, 2025 for a smaller geographical area. We'll have smaller governance, but we will be absolutely critical as LLDC to the inward investment in this area around the park in Stratford. Because having spent a huge amount of money on building the park, maintaining the venues, and bringing all of these attractions like new housing, new neighbourhoods and an arts and culture district, it's quite important that we continue to drive business and inward investment into the park. And so a key part of that evolved LLDC will include a focus strategically on driving growth and inward investment going forward.

**Peter Hendy:**

So the way I look at it myself is that LLDC, the present LLDC will have finished a phase in the development of the park, which is not having delivered everything, but having planned to deliver everything and put it in process. And then rightly, the boroughs will take back their planning powers on the 1st of December next year, 2024, and that paves the way for a different LLDC to move forward.

**Peter Hendy:**

I think it's really important. It's a beautiful place. We've created a beautiful place and actually, the success of LLDC will have the very important task of making sure it remains beautiful and attractive and good for local people with all the things on it, including East Bank, that we've put there. So that won't be a minor job, but it won't be the same as what we've done in the last, crikey, 14 years or so.

**Lyn Garner:**

Yes, most definitely. Of course, I always want to make clear to people as well that although the planning powers go back on the 1st of December, this will be maintained as a great state. So the park sits in three boroughs, actually, Newham, Hackney and Tower Hamlets. And those three boroughs are not going to be responsible for maintaining the park. We maintain it as a whole estate. And that goes to the point you were making earlier about keeping that high quality of the park for all the stakeholders that are involved, for all the residents here and for local people more generally to come and visit.

**Peter Hendy:**

We will also have a change in the personality at LLDC. The new LLDC will have a new CEO and it'll have a new chair and a new board, a smaller board because it'll have a smaller job, but very important job to do. We'll start advertising those posts in the new year. There'll be some changes in personnel throughout the organisation, but whilst the faces might change, the vision, commitment and dedication will remain a firm part of the new organization's DNA, just as it has done now, won't it?

**Lyn Garner:**

It absolutely will. And one of the things that's really important to me is to maintain the culture of this organisation going forward. It's actually achieved fantastic things in a really short period of time. People are really focused, they're energetic and enthusiastic about the park, and that's really key to maintain going forward.

**Peter Hendy:**

It is, and I absolutely echo that. I find the experience on the park uplifting and I find the people who work at LLDC, I find their commitment extraordinary and their commitment to enriching the lives both economically and socially and culturally and educationally of the people who live here absolutely wonderful.

**Peter Hendy:**

And to put it in context, actually, it's still true that actually, as Olympic and Paralympic legacies go, nobody has ever seen anything like this scale of development delivered in the world, actually. Wherever you go, you can go to other places which have had the Olympics and many of them are still discussing what the legacy should have been and what they would like it to be.

**Peter Hendy:**

And then I point to, rather smugly, to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and say, "Well, if you come and see us, we can show you what a good legacy looks like and we can introduce you to people who've benefited from it." There's a huge success story here for the country, for London, for the mayor, but actually also for local people and people in East London.

**Lyn Garner:**

Well, it's been lovely talking to you, Peter and seeing you here today. And this is the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park podcast.