

London Government Dinner
Mansion House
Thursday 15th January 2026
The Rt Hon The Lady Mayor of London
Alderman Dame Susan Langley DBE

Mr Mayor, Chair, My Lords, Fellow Aldermen, Mr Recorder, Sheriffs, Chief Commoner, Lord Lieutenant, My Lord Mayor of Westminster, Your Worships, Ladies and Gentlemen...

Good evening - and behalf of us all here at the City of London, a very warm welcome to Mansion House.

This annual London Government Dinner has been held here since 1962, just before I was born... a chance to come together at the start of the New Year - to make connections and reaffirm friendships old and new.

I am very pleased to welcome tonight our two guest speakers...both of them expert hands at this dinner by now: the Mayor of London, Sir Sadiq Khan, and the Chair of London Councils, Cllr Claire Holland OBE.

On behalf of everyone here, let me say a huge congratulations to Claire on her recent recognition.

Tonight, I want to talk about the City of London; why it matters, why it endures, and crucially, why our success depends not just on what happens here, within one square mile, but on our connections with the whole of our capital.

In many ways, the City of London is a curious place.

It's small enough to walk across in under half an hour, but influential enough to shape global markets.

It has fewer residents than many towns, yet by day has more people flowing through it than some European capitals.

It's ancient... older than many nations... but it's one of the most cutting-edge financial centres in the world.

This isn't an accident.

Our City's success rests on three enduring strengths: trust, talent, and connection.

So let me take each in turn. First, trust.

For centuries, the City has been a place where deals are made and honoured. People do business here because they trust and respect the system.

Contracts are enforced. Disputes are resolved. And in an increasingly uncertain world, that is priceless.

Second, talent.

The City has always attracted people who are ambitious, skilled, and globally minded.

They come from every corner of the UK and beyond.

They're experts in finance, law, technology, and innovations we don't even have a name for yet.

But that talent doesn't live, study, build a career, or create a future just in the City... it lives in Haringey and Hammersmith, Croydon and Camden.

You now have an East End girl standing before you as Lady Mayor.

Which brings me very neatly to our third strength: connection.

The City thrives because it's connected - to global markets, yes, but to the entire London ecosystem too.

Through its transport networks, universities, cultural institutions, and the diverse communities that bind us together.

London and the City... 32 boroughs and our Square Mile.

Because the truth is, none of us today can succeed in isolation.

In a competitive, turbulent world, fragmentation is weakness. Togetherness is strength.

It's why, for our part, the City Corporation always maintains its connections.

Just last month, our Policy Chair, Chris Hayward, announced an investment of over £200 million to 12 housing estates - in the City, yes, but also in Hackney, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, and Tower Hamlets.

The new London Museum, backed by more than £400 million from the City Corporation and the Mayor of London, is due to open this year - one of Europe's biggest cultural developments that will tell the story of our entire city.

The City Bridge Foundation is still London's largest independent charity funder, while the Lord Mayor's Appeal works throughout our capital, including, most recently, in Newham through its support for the West Ham Foundation and its work setting up new cadet units.

And the City of London Police is not only one of the highest performing police services in the country, but also has a unique responsibility as the national lead force for fraud.

It's a genuine centre of expertise and its deep connections with the private sector allow it to perform a role that no other police force could.

So, as you can see, we care about the whole, and importantly, we invest in the whole... just as the whole United Kingdom relies on the activity that takes place here, in the City.

The tax receipts generated by the financial and professional services sector represent more than half the UK's health budget.

And it's here that the growth we all want to see will be created. Here that the capital for infrastructure projects will be raised. And here that those same projects will be insured, contracts drafted and signed.

So anything that damages the Square Mile, damages us all - wherever in the UK we are.

Because in London, we don't compete locally... we compete globally. With the likes of New York, Singapore, and Paris.

It's why we cannot let our reputation be unfairly undermined.

So, if we want our city to retain its competitive position, we have to take control of our own narrative - combatting the naysayers, the doom mongers, and the keyboard warriors who talk London down, falsely painting it as a dangerous no-go area when the latest statistics prove quite the opposite.

And if we want our city to continue to flourish, we have to ensure the next generation have the same or better opportunities than we have had.

Because while talent is everywhere, opportunity is not.

So together, we need to show people that this is the place where you belong... and crucially, that this is the place where you can thrive.

We sit here tonight at the very heart of this living, breathing ecosystem that's powered by its people, their creativity and ideas.

The City of London has survived for nearly two thousand years, not because it's stayed the same, but because it's adapted, again and again, to new realities and evolving stories. Its own story.

From industrialisation and deindustrialisation to globalisation, digitisation, and now transformation - the age of AI, quantum, and crypto.

The next chapter will be no different.

Our ability to adapt will be defined not by our boundaries, perceived or real, but by our willingness to reach out and build partnerships - and by our willingness to stand up for the city we all love.

So this year I only have one New Year resolution: to do the very best I can, working with others, to help our city thrive.

Because for London, successful partnerships aren't about politics. They're not about protocol.

They're about making sure that, together, we are more than the sum of our parts.

So let 2026 be the year we all resolve to defend our enduring strengths: trust, talent, and connection.

It's what makes London the best city on earth... and that's the truth.

Thank you.