

Building Community Sharing Prosperity



CHRISTIAN
peoples
ALLIANCE

Greater London Authority Manifesto 2000

*The Policies of the
Christian Peoples Alliance
for the Office of Mayor
and the London Assembly*

cpa

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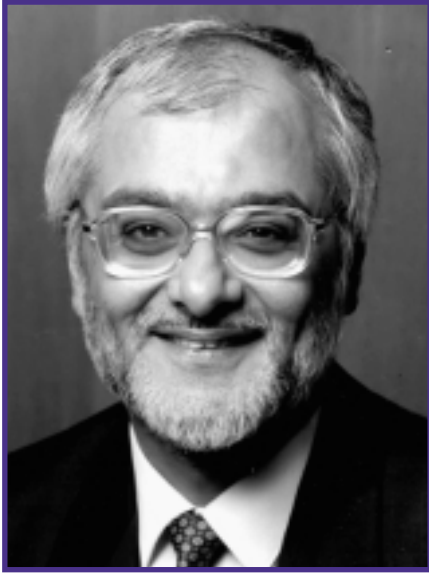
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Ram Gidoomal CBE

**Mayoral Candidate
Christian Peoples Alliance**

**“Plans to prosper,
not to harm,
plans to give hope
and a future.”**

Foreword

“London deserves better than to be kicked around, left, right and centre by the main political parties. That's why I'm standing for Mayor, to give Londoners a choice of something different. The new Mayor of London will have real power and influence. Who you choose matters.

London expects crime to be tackled.

I will lead the drive to restore confidence in the police and the police force's own morale.

Our children deserve the best.

As Mayor, I'll see that schools in London give children a framework of learning, and a respect for themselves and others.

Thirteen out of twenty-five of Britain's poorest boroughs are in London. This is intolerable.

I will use my business expertise to bring new investment and new jobs to the capital. Skills training will be targeted to all communities to offer people a route out of homelessness and poverty into homes and jobs.

It is not impossible for London to have a coherent, integrated transport system.

I will keep London Underground in the people's hands and raise investment through issuing a Peoples Bond. Priority coach networks will be established across London. Fare increases will be kept down through cost reductions.

Racial justice is the first step towards racial harmony.

I will work uncompromisingly to eliminate racial and institutional discrimination in all public bodies.

You want to live in a Beautiful London.

Urban areas will be cleaned-up. New recycling and energy-saving targets will be set and pollution-related health problems will be tackled.

The new Greater London Authority must model a new kind of politics.

Under the Christian Peoples Alliance, the GLA will be transparent, accountable, democratic, inclusive and open.

As Mayor I will do all I can to bring Christian Democratic values of justice, compassion, reconciliation and creativity. Far from being a weakness, our diversity is a cause of celebration and a source of strength.”

Ram Gidoomal

The Christian Democratic Vision

Much has been said about the condition of life in prosperous London for people in work, or who own a car, but there is another London that includes those without access to satisfying or reasonably paid work, those who live day by day with the experience of racism and social exclusion and people who are dependent entirely on public transport.

We want to see a London with thriving, diverse and vibrant communities where everyone shares in the capital's prosperity. Many Londoners experience loneliness, fear, exclusion, hate and poor quality relationships. We want London to be a friendly place, with caring communities. There is a massive system of community care and support throughout the city, rooted in family, religious and other voluntary networks. We want to see this recognised and built upon.

London is a world city.

This is reflected in many different areas: tourism, international transport, business, finance, education, culture and the arts, shopping, diplomacy and international politics. We will encourage local communities to build on this by developing local features, for example specialised shopping or buildings of historic or architectural value to attract visitors. We also want to encourage the development of community life through recognising and supporting local initiatives and special events.

But at the heart of a Christian Democratic vision for London is the commitment to share prosperity and to tackle inequality. Community is built when the forgotten and excluded are given justice and come to play their part in the life of the city.



Economic Regeneration

London has historic advantages that should enable us to create a twenty-first century model for other cities in work and business practise. The Information Technology (IT) revolution will encourage the de-industrialisation and de-commercialisation of London. This will mean skilled people will move outside the city unless the quality of life can be improved.

The Christian Peoples Alliance (CPA) is committed to speeding up the industrial logic created by the impact of IT, rather than attempting to slow it down. We shall help create and locate the new mega-corporations in Central London and will support the creation of tens of thousands of small niche companies. This is our dual industrial strategy for London.

Focussed and funded accessible business support will be provided and skilling to all communities to offer people a route out of homelessness and poverty into homes and jobs.

Giving London the skills it needs

The skills shortage will be addressed by the following initiatives:

- Establish a system of aptitude tests to identify the people who are most likely to be good at IT-related jobs, irrespective of age, previous schooling or employment, skin colour or gender.
- Give coupons that will enable these individuals to receive free transport to and from, as well as receive free instruction at, commercially established new "career teleports". These will provide crash courses in the latest areas of software development (eg Java, Linux and WAP) as well as in managing mega-corporations and niche companies.
- Provide incentives for the commercial creation of such schools. These incentives will be tied to how quickly and to how well paid the jobs are which are gained by their graduates. This will force these "career teleports" to be immediately responsive to the rapid changes in the skills market that we already see.
- Finance the entire system through the private sector, with encouragement and incentives from the public sector. Unlike the present student loan scheme, the financing will not be made available by banks to individual students, but by the "career teleports" themselves, who will contract to supply skilled labour for specified demand. This will make possible the retraining as well as the upgrading of skills of everyone who has the aptitude and the will to perform in the new economy.
- Work with the Learning Skills Council and the Small Business Service to target the most deprived areas with relevant products and services accessible to all sectors of the community.
- Work in partnership with the London New Deal Coalition and other employment networks.

A new business strategy

- Under Ram Gidoomal, London will get new strategic business leadership. A partnership will be formed with existing business support agencies to launch a **London Regeneration Fund** that will join with individuals and institutions in the provision of interest free loans. This will generate new resources to help the poorest areas of London. Services provided would include micro business start up funds, partnerships with corporate buyers and suppliers to get help in kind, start up facilities (discount packs, credit, extended payment terms, credit guarantees, etc.) These to be supplemented by the provision of business mentors, business surgeries and access to internet services.
- A consensus will be built on business rates and corporation tax, and an integrated view taken of office and domestic space and transport. These will require simultaneous consideration of the greening of London and the nurturing, development and exploitation of London's enormous cultural resources.
- We shall seek legal changes, not just in Britain but worldwide, to ensure that social responsibility is not perceived as a luxury, indulged in by a few businesses but is necessary for all businesses so that we can have a just and rich world in which life can be enjoyed by everyone.

- There will be better use of qualified professionals entering Britain as refugees by facilitating the recognition of professional training from other countries. There are recognisable qualification equivalences for most established educational systems, especially in Commonwealth and European countries. The difficulty for both the applicant and potential employer is:
 - no ready access to verification or equivalence of the qualification
 - concerns about authenticity
 - English language competence for some (although there are recognisable English as second language qualifications).

The CPA will help to remove these barriers by establishing an agency that can verify and/or authenticate qualifications on behalf of the employer/applicant. We shall also provide free English as a second language classes for all those who cannot meet the criteria. Vouchers for recognised centres will be given to identified groups e.g. refugees, new immigrants, and to designated community groups to establish centres to meet their local needs.

London as the Global internet capital

The aim of the CPA is to make London the world's g-business (global-business) capital. The emerging industrial logic of the information technology revolution favours the creation of tens of thousands of extremely small specialist niche companies which have the expertise to spot new opportunities created by the speed of technological developments as well as by industrial restructuring. To ensure London takes full advantage of these developments, we are committed to:

- Encourage BT to divest its London network into an independent company (possibly retaining a minority interest) to operate it as a "dark fibre" open access delivery network with an access (not usage) charge.
- Attract the telecom infrastructure of the world's biggest e-players to London by working for the creation of a "tax-free server farm" in London, with a high bandwidth connection to the Internet that is outside the UK telecoms regulatory regime and PTT tariff cartel.
- Give "registered specialised internet home delivery firms" (e.g. I-Force) the right to use bus lanes and free them from parking regulations for delivery purposes.
- Encourage local boroughs to transfer all their customer services to internet AND provide free domestic access. Install internet access points in libraries, public service buildings and all places where the public go for information.
- Provide incentives to small and micro-business start-ups with ideas and initiatives in e-business, Internet, and related fields. Reward internet companies for their low-environmental impact, low-density work place and global market awareness by tax concessions.
- Provide at least one tax-free/rate free year for any company planning to set up in London and intending to increase Londoners' access to, use of and enjoyment of the internet.
- Make Olympia the Internet-conference centre not just for the UK as it is at present, but for the whole world.

Eliminating Discrimination

The CPA will work uncompromisingly to eliminate all forms of discrimination in all public bodies. We commit ourselves to ensure that all public services under the control of the Greater London Authority will work towards:

- Full unconditional and unqualified support for all appropriate equal opportunities policies, programmes and projects.
- Equal, inclusive and open recruitment, based purely on merit.
- Provision of readily accessible small business support services which satisfy the needs of communities, growth businesses and micro businesses. In particular we will focus on businesses owned by minority ethnic or disadvantaged people.
- Equality of access, sufficiency of focused funding and participation for the excluded, unemployed minority ethnic people in compulsory and post-compulsory education, and other related training and skilling programmes.
- Holistic economic regeneration and development plans which will directly and locally benefit all those who are excluded.
- Facilitation of partnership support to ensure success in all viable projects generated or led by excluded people.
- Promotion of role models who are recognised by excluded communities as opportunities to adopt best practice. We will seek substantive progress in promoting social inclusion.
- Making buildings, public transport, education, homes, urban centres and public resources as accessible as possible to people with physical disabilities, mothers with young children and the elderly and infirm. In particular we will support new office/building standards that will facilitate and promote access for vulnerable individuals. In relation to public service offices, there should be readily available technology to assist users with their communication needs while respecting their privacy (e.g. available technology for the hearing impaired).
- Integrating education on equal opportunities and cultural diversity into the school curriculum. All staff in the public sector being able to respond appropriately and effectively to the needs of each individual member of the public.
- Work to combat homophobic attitudes, especially where these foster hate-related crime and violence.



Loving our Neighbour, the Asylum Seeker

We are opposed to the new asylum regime where applicants have no entitlement to benefits. Local authority responses in providing support have been limited and varied. Most do not make any direct cash payment and where food vouchers are given, these often prevent recipients from purchasing the most needed of items such as clothing for a hostile and alien weather.

- We shall press central and local government to provide the necessary resources to shorten the waiting time for asylum seekers and to provide them with the necessary support structures.

- We shall work very closely with Police and Police Policy Directorate in order to build a bridge of mutual understanding and respect between refugee communities and the Police. Ram Gidoomal will use his background as a refugee to educate the media about the positive contribution that refugees make to this country.
- Support will be given to displaced professionals in converting their knowledge and skills to UK standard and in learning to communicate in English in a professional environment.
- We shall highlight the need for education of refugees and for refugee children in particular. The system as it stands gives insufficient support to those children who have interrupted their schooling in order to flee for their lives.

Transport

London's transport system should empower and enable the weak. It should not exist just for the rich and strong. We should think in terms of helping everybody to live good lives, not in terms of elitist provision. Effective public transport helps everybody, including those without cars. It is especially good for the young, old, poor and isolated. These policies reflect that:

Issue a Peoples Bond to raise investment for London Underground

The Underground needs rebuilding and extending after decades of neglect. We oppose the privatisation plans of the Conservatives and Labour, as we believe privatisation will slow down the process of making improvements. Private companies usually want to invest (not too much) out of profits after recovering the money spent on purchasing the line. We believe that the Underground should remain with the people, because it is a London public service. Privatisation means that profits take priority over keeping fare increases to a minimum, investment in safety and services.

- The Underground needs investment and we plan to raise this by issuing a Peoples Bond. **Every citizen in London will have the right to purchase a bond.** If they are unable, or do not wish, to buy a bond, they will have the right to trade in their option at the market rate. We favour a bond Issue because it will be more cost efficient.
- A Peoples Bond will ensure that the key stakeholders – the citizens of London – directly influence the running, operation, maintenance and improvement of London Underground with a direct say and impact on services.
- Targeted cost reduction and more effective operations can generate revenue for re-investment and repayments.



Coaches as the cure for motorway madness

London's motorways, the M25 and the radial routes are clogged because they are full of cars with an average of 1.4 people in them, a vastly inefficient way of travelling.

- The answer is to create a network of coaches travelling between cities and around London. One coach removes a mile of car traffic from a motorway lane. They are twice as efficient as trains in energy use and speed.
- We propose that the M25 and radial motorways will have coach lines, a fast service round the M25 and transfer stops at the radial motorways into and out of London and links to the outer underground. This will eliminate the long drag into and out of Victoria Coach Station for most journeys.
- With coaches frequent, faster, more comfortable and more relaxed than car travel, we could transfer millions of journeys, clear the motorways and cut pollution on those journeys. We need to move from self-interest resulting in traffic jams to communal solutions.

Tackling traffic jams

Traffic jams occur because cars (mainly) take up too much road space. We cannot create more road space by building roads; therefore we must economize on space. Before increased capacity on the Underground comes on stream, steps must be taken to improve the reliability and accessibility of the bus networks. Buses economize, if they are full.

- We shall ensure **BUSES** travel fast with bus lanes, priority, conductors and a frequent efficient system. The present inefficiency caused by competition, unpredictable journeys etc. needs tackling by good traffic priority and non-competitive franchising linked to payment by service.
- We propose that London pioneer the **URBAN CAR** - new lightweight vehicles designed for urban journeys, with lower tax and much lower petrol consumption, which economize on road space and have priority on some roads. These could cut the number of inter-city cars on the roads and parking, and cut pollution on most private local journeys by two thirds.
- We will start by supporting car-sharing schemes in new-build public housing projects, in return for reducing the requirement for parking spaces in planning regulations.
- **BIKES AND MOPEDS** will be given higher priority, especially for schoolchildren, by the construction of safe routes and through the development of the London Cycle Network. Every child will be given the chance to receive on-road cycle training.

We have set the ambitious target for our transport proposals of cutting inter-city car journeys by a third or more.

Improve Public Transport planning

The planning of public transport must be designed to respond to the health/social needs and patterns of relevant communities. Information from accident departments for example would indicate 'black spots' and delays through poor public services. In addition, integrating public transport with outpatient services and local clinics would cut delays in the health service and be more user friendly. Task groups would be established to ascertain the transport needs of those using health and social services so as to appropriately integrate public transport policies and practices with health and social service provision.

Set up a Travel Bank - Credit Card + Smart Card

We shall establish a Travel Bank with individual accounts for travellers. By using Smart Card technology, individuals can top up fresh credit to travel anywhere in London. This facility could be extended to include museum sites and other cultural landmarks. Eventually, it could include the whole of the UK.

Environment

Reduce traffic pollution

At present, Londoners live with high levels of pollution, asthma, dirt, illness and travel stress. Our proposed transport measures would improve this significantly, saving billions in congestion, pollution and routine car costs

- By transferring most inter-city journeys to coach
- By rebuilding the Underground into a clean, efficient system.
- By transferring local journeys to bus, urban car, moped and bike
- Work for the car-free urban village

The dominance of cars in London spoils the environment of many key communal areas. London's Mayor should invite local communities to move to the urban village model creating car free zones (except for residents) at centres where people congregate, as well as in the central areas where pedestrianisation is being considered. Other roads could be pedestrian priority zones where cars have to travel within 20 mph limits and give priority to pedestrians. Planning policies will ensure new residential neighbourhoods are designed to ensure the safety of children and other pedestrians.

Housing

London's housing is in increasingly short supply, with spiralling waiting lists and many households priced out of the private market.

- We will develop a strategy to maximise the potential for regeneration and new development, concentrating on bringing empty homes back into use, converting buildings to residential or mixed use and using vacant sites. The strategy will be integrated with other policies, ensuring that infrastructure is in place and building densities are appropriate to the location.
- Communities will be given resources to participate fully in this process, with options for local management, maintenance and self build within their locality, creating training opportunities and local businesses.

Greening London

London's open spaces and trees are greatly valued, but many areas of the city are devoid of such pleasant environments, needed to soak up polluting gasses and beautify the city.

- We will establish a network of 'green ways', with tree and flower planting to pedestrian priority zones, linking parks to canals, the riverside, allotments and local town centres to provide routes in and around the city and encourage wildlife corridors.
- Local businesses will be established to manage the green ways, creating local employment, education opportunities and providing organic produce from the allotments for local sale.



New recycling & energy saving targets

Investment is desperately needed to reduce both energy use and waste in London. We aim to encourage the creation of energy related local industry, creating jobs by:

- Improving the energy efficiency of buildings, improving occupants' health and reducing fuel bills.
- Operating recycling schemes, turning waste and litter into raw materials.
- Using recycled materials to make products from artwork to insulation and from composting to furniture.

A Healthier London

To achieve a genuine 'healthy London' whether from a physical, mental, social, spiritual or economic perspective requires the integration of all services directly under the authority of sphere of influence of the Mayor and London Assembly.

- The CPA therefore supports the creation of a **Public Health Officer** for London to involve the public and provide policy advice.

Tackle health inequalities

Health inequalities will be tackled as a priority. It can't be right that life expectancy for men in Bromley is four years higher than in Lambeth. Health problems are directly linked to poverty, homelessness and access to decently-paid work.

- Our plans to bring new jobs and investment to London are targeted towards the inner-city boroughs and will make a real difference in improving health.
- We shall introduce a benchmarking appraisal procedure by which each public sector initiative will be evaluated. This procedure will have a 'holistic' perspective to identify unanticipated impacts and consequences in health which may not be recognised at present. This will be especially important in the focus we propose to give to black and ethnic minority health issues.

Partners in care

- We will work in partnership with local communities and non-governmental organisations to develop neighbourhood care and support schemes associated with both paid and volunteer workers. Through liaison with Primary Care Groups and Trusts, new models of community care will be fostered which provide relevant and accredited vocational education and training for these groups and other lay and volunteer carers will be encouraged.

Tackle pollution-related health problems

The transport policy will cut emissions from vehicles, reducing levels of air pollution, while pedestrian priority zones will encourage Londoners to exercise more, with reduced risk of accidents.

- Planning policy will be geared to ensuring that both new and modernised homes are upgraded to reduce dampness related health problems, while warmer homes will help safeguard the health and comfort of elderly people.

Promote healthy lifestyles

We shall work with agencies promoting healthy lifestyles. The causes of substance abuse will be tackled and a firm stance taken against the illegal use of drugs. Alcohol abuse will be tackled by confronting the way big companies promote alcohol to young people. Schools will be encouraged to approach the issue of increased under-age pregnancies by promoting the stability offered by marriage and sexual abstinence. The CPA is opposed to the promotion of homosexuality by the GLA.

Respecting Life

Support will be given to pro-life caring agencies in their counselling and bereavement work with women.

- It is our objective to create a service that covers the whole of the metropolitan area. We shall work with local authorities and caring agencies in offering positive alternatives to abortion.
- Hospitals and residential homes will be asked to look at their policies towards the treatment of the elderly. The CPA believes it is never justified to treat elderly people as less entitled to life and respect merely because of their age or because of frailty.

Policing

Restoring public confidence

With public confidence in the police at an all time low and with the police force's own morale needing to be restored, building trust and confidence between the Met and Londoners is our topmost priority. Without this trust, any strategy to make London safe, tackle crime or get rid of fear will be an uphill task. Our commitment is to start by putting more bobbies on the beat, to tackle race crimes, street robberies and domestic violence.

- Robbery leapt 34 per cent last year. Police stations in the worst affected inner city boroughs will get expert teams to work alongside them. With additional police on the streets, they will pursue agreed strategies to reduce robbery.
- Police response to black victims of crime must be swift and fair. Targets will be set to recruit more black policemen. The proper use of stop and search will be encouraged and training given to restore police willingness to use this power.
- Domestic violence will be tackled through early intervention by the caring agencies. Prosecutions will be pursued where possible without involving the victim giving evidence.
- Action will be taken over burglary and car thefts. Surveillance teams will catch the usual suspects. But steps will be taken to provide a database for the Met to ensure stolen property is returned to its rightful owners.
- Fear of crime will be addressed by improving street lighting and CCTV. We shall build on the successful Neighbourhood Watch Scheme to encourage local community safety strategies, especially women's safety at night.



Fresh leadership

Police morale will be improved through effective leadership, management and business input. Cross-cultural training will be provided to include all levels of management from the most senior to the newest recruit and include those associated with the Police Force, e.g. external members of interview/assessment panels.

- Targets will be set for higher rates of crime detection and solving. Ways will be sought to reduce police paperwork and speed up court procedures for cases involving petty or non-violent crime.
- We shall work with the criminal justice system to improve conviction and reduce recidivism. As nine out of ten prisoners are released without a job and a third of those under 18 no longer live with their families, the CPA will ensure offenders get proper rehabilitation and that sources of stability, such as families, maintain their relationships.
- We will support schemes to provide restitution to victims of crime.
- There will be co-ordination between London's four police forces (the Met, City, Royal Parks and Transport Police) and work to establish a relationship of trust with the new Metropolitan Police Authority.
- Interagency collaboration between the police and other public service sectors will be strengthened through relevant joint education/training and strategy development in areas of common interfaces with the public, e.g. dealing with the mentally ill, child protection, alcohol and substance misuse, vagrancy and communicating with minority or vulnerable groups.
- There will be a review of employment and personnel practices in order to work towards the creation of a healthier working environment for police officers.

Culture, Media and Sport

At the heart of our vision for London is to transform the city into a place of celebration and creativity. The cultural life of the capital's diverse communities is a source of strength to its members and is a reflection of God's desire that people should enjoy life to the full. The city's well-being cannot be judged by economic factors alone, but is a reflection of the role of recreation in people's lives.

- We shall establish a new board to be known as **London Heritage** which will take strategic responsibility to develop the cultural life of London. The arts, galleries and museums, tourism and sport, broadcasting, library services, film production and the buildings and heritage collections of the capital will all be developed by the board as part of an integrated strategy with existing bodies such as English Heritage and the London Arts Board.
- The cultural life of London must be accessible. Support will therefore be given to small local community arts projects as well as to the prestigious artistic centres. Groups representing disabled people will have a key role in decisions affecting their access to London's theatres, cinemas and concert halls. Ticket prices will be a critical factor in decisions over grant-aid support to cultural organisations.
- Many children do not enjoy the benefits to health and their emotional development offered by sport and the arts in London. By working with schools and London's local authorities, all young Londoners can be given the opportunity to develop their full potential and to attend cultural events on a regular basis.

- With the changes to London's economy through the IT revolution, the future economic success of the city will be dependent on the creative and cultural sector making London an attractive place to live and work. The role of public funding will continue to be vital to the arts. But increased business sponsorship of the arts and private sector partnership funding will be sought.
- London's heritage and its national sporting centres are a focus of attraction for numerous visitors and tourists. To maintain and develop London's global role, steps will be taken to conserve and promote access to the city's natural and built environment.



Transparent and Accountable Governance

We aim to establish the GLA as the most modern, open and efficient local government in the world. We will benchmark against the best performing cities in the world and set ambitious, comprehensive, quantifiable targets to be achieved by the end of the Mayor's term of office.

- We will work closely with all sectors of the communities by appointing representatives to work with the Mayor and contributing to all GLA policies at an early stage. All of London's publicly funded bodies must be reviewed for inclusiveness, customer focus and added value.
- All public appointments will be under Nolan principles and strictly monitored, at all stages (from search to appointment), to ensure that all public bodies reflect the community being served.
- We recognise the public sector duty to promote equality and to ensure the availability of all information by electronic and print media.

We believe our policies cannot be implemented in isolation, but must work together to bring into reality the potential of the Capital as a successful world city where every citizen is respected and valued for their contribution. This can occur as we use our resources justly and equitably in partnership with Londoners to provide well thought out and sustainable solutions.

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