

MAYOR OF LONDON

Commission for Diversity into the Public Realm, Virtual Meeting

23 February 2021 | 11:00 – 13.00

Record of the meeting

Co-chairs:

Justine Simons OBE Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries,
Dr. Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and
Community Engagement

Commissioners:

Aindrea Emelife
Binki Taylor
David Bryan
Eleanor Pinfield
Gillian Jackson
Jack Guinness
Revd Professor Keith Magee
Lynette Nabbosa
Pedro Gil
Robert Bevan
Sandy Nairne
Toyin Agbetu
Dr Zoé Whitley

Apologies

Jasvir Singh OBE
Riz Ahmed

1) Introductions

- Welcome and introductions.
- Focus of first meeting - outline the vision for the Commission and hear about public engagement so far.

2) Overview of the Commission

The Commission has been formed to:

- Create debate, by opening up a wide conversation in London, across the UK and globally
- Consider different ways to evaluate contested heritage

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- Host speakers and hear evidence sessions to inform the discussion
- Deliver work that better reflects London's story and values
- Champion new public realm commissions to improve representation
- Support local authorities, communities and institutions to navigate contested heritage
- Establish best practice and standards, for example commissioning guidance include, decision making and fair pay
- Lead and recommend changes in policy

International Discussion

- London is not alone in addressing this important subject, but part of a wider conversation - nationally and globally. We are working closely with other global cities including New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Lagos and Sydney, as well as Bristol and Manchester in the UK.

Outline of the Partners Board and Borough Working Group

- The Partners Board comprises a group of statutory bodies, funders, policy makers and experts, who work across many different aspects of the public realm. It will act as a reference group, with expertise on the interests of the voluntary and community sector, artistic community, diverse communities, heritage and the wider public realm.
- The Borough Working Group will ensure shared leadership and support the Commission's work to have both a pan London and local focus. Borough leaders were consulted early in this process and it was their suggestion which resulted in the Borough Working Group. This group will help make the commission a shared endeavour across the capital and make new projects a reality.

3) Breakout session

Commission members regrouped in breakout sessions and explored challenges and opportunities for the Commission's work.

Key points raised:

- Language is key to communicating important and complex messages.
- Programmes of public art must reflect complex experience.
- It is not about re-writing the past but telling a fuller story and wider representation.
- Embedding best practice for the long term is important.
- Commissioning of new markers is a significant opportunity to enrich the London landscape.
- Digital technology is an important tool.
- Broad definition of public realm in line with Mayor's Public London Charter.
- Engage and empower local artists.
- Commission can support education about London's history.

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- This work is about building bridges and being inclusive - this is an opportunity for everyone.
- This Commission is focused on the public realm and sits alongside other programmes which support London's communities.

4) Engagement presentation

Our Approach:

- Roadshows (with Partners Board and key organisations).
- Ongoing engagement through GLA digital engagement platform Talk London.
- Commission community research through JA Studio with under-represented groups.
- Work within COVID-19 restrictions to deliver accessible events programme.

So far Londoners have told us:

- Recognition that identities are complex and intersectional.
- 'Everyday' Londoners are important as well 'heroes'.
- Recognition of the context of systemic inequalities.
- Community-led, participatory decision-making processes are key.
- Education and participation from younger generations is vital.
- Opportunities of the 'digital public realm' and non – traditional methods of commemoration and celebration.

5) Communications introduction

- Briefing from GLA press team on communications, particularly during the pre-election period for the Mayoral elections, starting on 22 March.

6) Next Steps

- Agreement to meet again ahead of pre-election period for Mayoral and Local Elections.