

A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS

An Inclusive City Growth Workshop

11th November 2016, 9.30 – 13.00

Culture

Table 7 Session 1

Facilitator in bold facilitator – comments in bold

Respondents in regular text

These notes are a summary of the conversation

Session 1, Table 7

Chenine Bhatena (Facilitator)

Prakash Daswani

Paul Bonham, Arts Council England

Andrew Hurst, One Dance UK

Jonathan Blathwayt, Planning Policy, City of London Corporation

Toby Laurent Belson, Brownbaby

Ellen Storrar, London Borough of Waltham Forest

Michael Ball, Waterloo Community Development Group

Steven Burak, Just Space/Reclaim Our Spaces

Let's introduce ourselves. Welcome. I am senior cultural lead at the GLA. We need to come up with three points at the end of the session. They might be particular areas of focus or a question or policy to put forward to the Mayor's office.

Just to be clear, this is for a new cultural strategy and also London Plan. We need to think about both those things?

There will be a new cultural strategy, which we will start working on next year. There will be a cultural chapter within the London Plan, amongst other things.

Our thought and discussion today is to get to that point?

It is also on social integration, but we can shape some of the discussion towards this and what people also want to talk about. There will be consultation for the cultural strategy. Let's go round the table and introduce ourselves.

My name is Prakash Daswani. I no longer work in culture, but set up and ran an organisation for 27 years that was funded by the Arts Council. We did free public events and art all over the city, and more recently created an artists' network comprising more than 1,000 practitioners from all over the world who are now settled in London. Last thing I did before I left was to raise funds for the Heritage Lottery Fund for a skills training program for young people to get into

executive decision-making positions in the heritage sector. Funding we raised helped 77 young people; 85% of them found employment. Today I would like to know what's been going on in the last two years as I am no longer in the sector. See what has changed. Want to see what has happened since the last plan was referred to, which I believe was in 2010, and discuss the risk of trying not to reinvent the wheel.

I'm Paul Bonham. I am a relationship manager/grants officer at the Arts Council England. Want to hear where things are right now. Here to listen, and to see how London Plan differs and the alignment of London thinking with the national framework.

My name is Andrew. I am chief executive for One Dance UK. Interested to see if there are plans to use dance in this agenda, as there are things happening in that field and it's something we or our members could help with, including individuals and organisations.

I'm Jonathan Blathwayt and I'm the planning policy officer at City of London Corporation. Looking at becoming more inclusive in our planning. How can we meet needs of our local community as well as international community?

I'm Toby. I'm a community artist, designer, activist and educator. Work on a number of different grassroots campaigns across London, but mainly based in Ladbroke Grove. Our culture has been exploited, appropriated and used. Want to know, how do communities actually take control? How do we take back the control that has essentially been given to charities and NGOs and other organisations that pay out high salaries? How do communities empower themselves? I'm currently part of the Notting Hill support group that is focused on helping the community make the most out of carnival. There are constant attempts to carve carnival up and give it to people outside the community. How is the GLA going to support communities?

I'm Ellen Storrar. I work for the policy and public affairs team for Waltham Forest Council. How can we build culture into Waltham Forest? It's become a big priority since the Olympics. How can it be integrated? We see culture as community cohesion, and welcome discussions on how we can build a narrative at a London level.

I'm Michael Ball from Waterloo Community Development Group. Want to make sure area is put to best use for the community. Waterloo community has grown from 4,000 to 12,000 people. It is a big cultural centre. How does this integrate with the community who don't seem to get a look in, even though they are very proud of their area? Community and arts are often at odds; we should all be on the same side. Really interested in integration. In London Plan there is a desire to grab town centres and do major redevelopment. How do we ensure that town centres are not taken over by the development process and how can we enhance what is there?

I'm Steve. I'm an activist and live in Camden. What is culture? Culture needs to permeate all ten categories. It's been sidelined. Best type of society, the most resilient and diverse, is able to flourish by using culture. Should be more central to policies. It's about people flourishing, not buildings.

Main topic seems to be civic engagement – integration and diversification, and also local leadership.

Also about economics and economic failure. The X factor is culture. Culture is positive.

What do you mean by 'economics'?

Talking about finance. Our economy in London has come from culture. Have to be honest. Culture is integral to London but being exploited.

To a certain extent you are right, but I also believe that the value of culture is upheld by a lot of people. There is a chance with the new administration to change and move forward, more in the direction of people and the social capital of our city. Sadiq Khan is trying to change things. Wants to work with people and communities. Very supportive about events like carnival. Let's look forward, not back. I can see a change in leadership in the city. This is a chance to see what works. What new ideas are there? What solutions?

Culture always exceeds the economic. People will just do things despite the economics. Spaces that are not being used are being used by artists.

Culture reactivates spaces, but again these spaces that are reactivated go back to the economy. This is happening all the time. Communities are being abused.

We have a planning system now, there for us to use. We have 'agent of change', which was brought in to protect places like the Ministry of Sound, skate parks and places that are owned by local people. Money from MOS campaign, for example, has impacted smaller projects. This is progress.

The real priority is this now. How can cultural strategy support positive activism? A lot of this comes down to legal skills, how you are presenting the arguments. It's about all cultural space. How can the cultural strand of the Mayor support that?

Power and values. There is a danger that the values we take for granted will be reduced going forward. Need to value what we have and reaffirm. Have to talk to people one to one, find out what is going on.

Want to talk about growth agenda for the city. We are experiencing biggest and fastest growth of the city ever. How can we step back and look at how we can get involved? People in positions of power are driving growth. How can we take back some control? We have a capital infrastructure plan but we have no cultural infrastructure plan. How does it fit in?

Been looking with Just Space and mapping.

Need to reclaim term 'regeneration'. Nonsense term; it means redevelopment and big bucks. Need to concentrate on what makes spaces exciting. What is the real value of a space, not just economic? London Plan has to look at cultural identity of a community and the spaces within it. London Plan needs to start from there. What is the cultural identity of a space?

Councils are taking quite a large amount of money through levies etc. How can this money be put back into the community? How are the community involved in the decision making? Who makes the decisions about where the money goes? Could there be a community's fund?

There is a lack of resources. Many people are involved and making changes off their own backs voluntarily. How does community benefit from carnival? How can they? The fund from the council has already run out.

Should a fund for communities be set up, one specific to London?

This would be incredibly useful.

Could we have a London version?

There isn't much money to be had.

I disagree. There is money coming in from the cultural infrastructure. However, who is making the decisions to use the money efficiently?

How is it that there is money but we don't see it filter down?

Who's making the decisions? For example, seven new theatres are being built in Southwark. Who took this decision? The GLA is trying to make a cultural structure plan. Should we have a borough consortium?

A lot of activism is seen as negative. Is there a development plan? Have to find right way to propose change.

Need to have data to know where cultural spaces are needed.

Need a consortium of communities.

Yes. It's a very different picture from borough to borough

There is an imbalance. Need to have more of an overview of how money can be used more efficiently and where it is needed.

Need to move things away from central locations. This can help regenerate other communities.

Need a strong voice from GLA that it's about communities, not just economics. Developers are hard negotiators.

GLA needs to regain control from the developers. The GLA needs to get behind the community again.

Communities and local authorities want to be catalysts for change. The Mayor is committed to finding ways to change how things currently work. He wants to introduce new policies to help communities. Your input has been very useful today. Please email me if you have any further ideas or thoughts on what has been discussed. Thank you everyone.

Culture

Table 7 Session 2

Session 2, Table 7

Chenine Bhatena (Facilitator)

Michael Atkins, London Borough of Bexley

Linda Beard, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Graham Saunders, Historic England

Brenda Downes, Lewisham Irish Community Centre and Outreach Service for Roma and Gypsy Travellers

Welcome. I am Chenine, senior cultural strategy lead and part of the access and integration and culture team. Here to discuss areas of interest with you today

Principal planner for London office. Lead of Mayoral strategies, culture strategies and environment. Here to talk about the heritage aspect as London has a strong heritage.

Planning policy team. Involved in working on the gross strategy for the borough of Bexley. Looking at housing targets and this rising significantly in the future. Opportunity areas in our area. Interested in future large-scale developments and how this will affect our area and its heritage. How do we integrate growth in town centres with what exists already? How do we 'advertise' ourselves more. How can we make the most of the culture of our area and extend it further? We have important heritage buildings. How can we get the best out of what we have?

Interested in the heritage of boroughs and areas and how this is being affected by growth.

I'm Linda Beard from Barking and Dagenham. I also work in planning policy. Want to look at how a borough can grow. We've had our very own growth commission to see how this can happen. Culture is very big in our area at the moment – the council are trying to create artists' work spaces. Want to promote area as a place where artists can come and work. We are also embarking on getting a film studio set up and buying land for this project with the help of the GLA. Concerned about the heritage aspect of the area. We have quite a complex site – conservation area. How do we protect it and enhance its use?

Two things we are looking at which are interconnected. One is growth and how we think about culture as that growth agenda in terms of jobs, employment skills, and space. The other is identity and character and the heritage of our places, and how we hold on to that despite the speed at which London is growing. How we build this into the planning.

Interesting point – whose heritage is it? Whose culture? London is so diverse with so many different cultures and communities. How do we capture that and cultivate it?

Definition of Londoners. Different types of Londoners. Why are some cultures more valued than others? Why regenerate a community that was already vibrant? Many small communities are

being lost. In 'the selling of London' of the previous administration, communities are getting lost.

Fascinating subject. There are opportunity areas along the river – 33 of them at the moment that the Mayor is regenerating. Does the framework for this take into account the starting point of these areas?

In our area, the opportunity area is towards Eastwood. Pending future extension to Crossrail. Redevelopment area – house prices are rising. Local residents are in an opportunity area. These existing communities are going to be in the mix of this. They have to be incorporated into the growth of the area.

Would you say that the cultural aspect of these places is not being addressed?

I can hear the challenges and difficulties, and it's brilliant to be able to discuss these issues, because it reasserts what we are losing in the city. Not sure how it works at a local authority level; maybe you can shed some light. When I went to Amsterdam a few years ago I observed that when they regenerate an area they give funding for a year for programs to be developed within it. They then stand back for a year and observe. They develop a regeneration strategy from this. I think that's what we've lost. We have been too caught up in the infrastructure needs. We almost need a social infrastructure plan first, which deals with the needs of people. Have talked to developers about this.

Communication needs to reach all groups. Affluent areas tend to speak out more.

This question could also be for Historic England. Is there an opportunity to create a narrative of these places – particularly those 33 opportunity places – that speaks of the history and the people and to give this to developers to work with, so they can build on what already exists rather than change or demolish what's already there?

That would be a great idea. Buildings that are important to the community could be saved and used for local community groups, local art groups or charities, for example.

I was thinking of your programme that you advertised recently, the Great Place Scheme, which was Historic England, Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. It's an incredible programme about identity and character and place making, and I wonder whether we could have that programme, or a version of it, in an opportunity area. That would create that narrative and we could give it to local authorities.

It's a good idea, but difficult to integrate. Need a shift. It needs to be embedded in the plan. The developers will look at this, but then gets pushed to the side.

Needs to be done at the beginning before any planning is done.

Need engagement to create that narrative. Within the development framework this is kept very much at arm's length – even from us, a statutory organisation. Feel sorry for the communities that live there, because they are even further away from this. We all want the essence of London to be enhanced.

Number of boroughs use characterisation studies as part of their evidence base for their local plan and the SPG.

Think that just sits on a shelf.

Some people use those tools, some don't.

We've just done a study on all the characterisation studies in London and how they are used. Variety of approaches. Richmond used it from a community approach, which was very interesting.

Where do communities living on the river, living on canals, the Travellers, how do they come into all this?

Be interesting for the GLA to think about how to capture our diverse communities at a strategic level. If you can start to frame this, to show the diversity of London in very broad strategic terms, how can that inform the narrative of the places that need to change?

That's interesting, as London & Partners are doing a campaign across London, but this is more from a tourism point of view. Wonder whether our role is to work with them and find out what's going on at a local level, and how people engage with each other and across their communities. Capture what people value and their places.

How do you capture what people value? I feel London is being developed mainly for very few private investors and not being developed for people who live and work here.

I agree. There is an indigenous London community whose voices are being lost. We've lost a certain civic leadership.

Boroughs are selling publicly owned assets.

Well some of them are buying!

Libraries are being shut down. We talk about losing culture.

Difficult, as have to balance future of the city while retaining what we love. Examples of amazing libraries, like Lewisham, which uses a collaborative approach with artists to keep it open. We are still in austerity and we need new thinking and ideas.

It's about sharing facilities and making use of them so they are used to their full potential. Need to integrate new public spaces into the community so they are not just for new residents but are shared.

This could be due to the communities and not necessarily the council or the developers. Communities need to feel ownership of their areas.

Within some of the emerging frameworks some super neighbourhoods are being created that are not even connected to London. Shouldn't refer to new places as separate from London; should be part of it. Shouldn't use new 'quarters' to divide London.

How many more quarters can we have? Things are changing, but we need to go along together. That's not happening.

What would you like to see change, from a community perspective?

Information coming in from a London level or local level. People are constantly surprised. Don't put everything online. People don't – some people can't.

Decline of local papers makes information difficult to receive. Journalists were the only ones who talked about planning. No one has taken over that role.

Most successful consultation on planning policy side was when we went into supermarkets. You have to go out to people.

The tools are there; they do exist. Need to re-engage and reinvest in them, and especially in terms of when there are master planning requirements.

Need more direction from the government. Want to try to give groups some responsibility. Neighbourhood plans can't oppose local plans for housing. I would love to see a plan that is developed by the borough.

Mayor could take the lead here. Seemed to have lost active engagement of communities over last few years. The review of Mayoral strategies is an opportunity to reinvigorate that approach. Sadiq is very keen to engage with communities.

He wants ideas to develop London. He wants input from everyone here, not just the GLA. Talking about planning in the first session, about the planning gains and levies that local authorities get. How can we use some of that to activate communities a bit better, in advance of planning or through the planning process? Think we should have a fund that's pooled across the city so we have a much better joined-up conversation. The new cultural infrastructure plan is a new Mayoral commitment to look at the overall culture of the city. How can we use that to influence the London Plan? How do we put things in place with the local authorities for things to work better?

Put things more in the hands of the people who live in existing areas. Planners seldom live where they work.

Could we take an Amsterdam approach and put money into a community or opportunity area and have an open discussion about how to harness the best for its development?

Think the tools are there. Need someone to be the champion of this. GLA in a very good position for this, especially the Mayor. Could do workshops on where those changes take place at a regional level. Could develop this with stakeholders like ourselves.

Discussion last session about the Neighbourhood Plan not being specific to London. Could we redevelop a London neighbourhood plan?

That would be a really good idea.

Need to seek balance and coherence. We've lost concept of London as London. London is fragmented, at a borough level. We need to see each other as one larger community. Policy and processes encourage this.

Working-age population of our community means that most of our community commute to go to work and only come back to Bexley to sleep. They consider themselves from Kent, although it is still London.

Can I jump in with another dimension to this? What about town centres? I've heard John Lett talk about this. Town centres are where the greatest interaction in society is. How is growth going to affect these centres? How will they cope?

GLA regeneration team have been working very closely with high streets and town centres on how to retain the identities of these places. Been some great projects around the city.

Functionality of town centres is changing. Need a sustainable approach. 5,000 people in Sutton town centre – how is this sustainable? How can you address functionality going forward?

If we had a cultural and creative narrative we could inform developers and councils to influence positive change.

The main points that have come up over these two sessions are as follows:

- 1. Pace of growth in the city – whose culture is being developed? Who are the decision makers?**
- 2. Invisible barriers – people feel disenfranchised. How do we protect the local identity of place? The role of people in protecting heritage – the voice of young people is missing. How do we include them?**
- 3. Tools – neighbourhood plans are not created for London. Create a London Neighbourhood Plan. Assets of community value – do they work? Do people have a voice?**
- 4. Consultation – how do we include people and their voice in planning?**
- 5. Planning gains – section 106 levies. How are gains being used? Who are the decision makers?**
- 6. Role of GLA – opportunity of the London Plan. Leadership at a local level. How do we bring communities back into that field?**
- 7. Social infrastructure and community-led structure should come first.**