

# A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS

## An Inclusive City Growth Workshop

11<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 9.30 – 13.00

### Inclusive Design Table 10 Session 1

**Facilitator in bold facilitator – comments in bold**

Respondents in regular text

*These notes are a summary of the conversation*

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*Session 1, Table 10*

#### **Rachel Smalley (Facilitator)**

David Burdus - Burdus Access

Andrea Carey Fuller - Deptford Neighbourhood Action

Neil Smith - BuroHappold Engineering

Luke Burroughs - London Councils

Tracy Lazard - Inclusion London

Ruben Saxon - The Social Innovation Partnership

Graham Saunders - Historic England

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**We've got some loose questions here. Here at the GLA, we take an inclusive design approach. Let's question the current approach take into consideration the population's response. Let's also see if the current approach needs to be updated. There's a copy of the SPG here, which is the Supplementary Planning Guidance. In the London plan we have policy 7.2 which requires the high standard of inclusive design. The SPG explains how that can be achieved. We are reviewing the London plan next year 2017. Any comments on the SPG or policy approach would be really useful for us.**

I have some strong views on the implementation of the policy. I think the implementation is inconsistent London-wide because there is a lack of understanding on the borough level. This references the DDA division where we talk about accessible houses. There are 10% DDA flats. The broader version is that the policy becomes focused on disabled people, and not inclusion of different groups. When we talk about inclusive play for example with the outdoor gyms, they don't attract most of the local communities. for e.g. where I live there are Bangladeshi women who are not involved with health and well-being activities organised by the Virgin Active gym community.

**So you're saying that it doesn't look at it from a broad city level. In terms of lack of understanding, could the policy wording be clearer or is it the case of the SPG requiring it to be a clearer document?**

I'm not sure about that but there needs to be significantly more skills to deliver that.

There is a lack of engagements with disabled people. 10-15 years ago, most Boroughs have access groups. There are no access groups now. Instead there are ad hoc strategic access groups which are not effective or resourced. I'm agreeable to what you said about DDA which is not inclusive. There are still temporary ramps installed when people kick a fuss. There is no conceptual understanding of what is needed. It's critical that disabled people who are living there are at the heart of the design so that plans are followed through. If we're serious, the Mayor must engage with disabled people organisations at the local and London level.

### **Do you think this situation is linked to a depletion of roles between Boroughs?**

It's a reduction in those roles and in authorities, and a lack of funding in disabled people's councils so much so that they cannot support an access group.

That's really refreshing and accurate to say. I'm based in Northeast and don't know what it's like in London and don't know how to monitor it or plan this area in a social context. My area doesn't have the amount of expertise. It's not really done at all on a professional level. The design and construction industry is not necessarily bringing relevant people to task early on in the process. Community involvement must start from the beginning otherwise it looks like we are telling people what and what not to do. What kind of framework can we build with? The educational initiatives with the built environment design project is perfect. How do we get the right disabled people in at the high level in the process? It's about representation.

I agree. The problem is that it's a building regulation issue and it has to meet statutory obligation. This also has to be accessible to the client.

We need real life case study of a project from top to bottom. So that the industry understands and can audit changes. This doesn't have to be publicly declared but we can share challenges. When the lottery and arts council were putting money into these projects then targets were met and looked at.

### **So you're saying it's how we could use the tools within the GLA like the planning tools.**

When you got a planning brief which is rare, it's good to turn it into friendly project to start this initiative about sharing ideas.

Like an open forum perspective.

From the neighbourhood planning perspective there is a certain demographic that needs to be on the planning committee advising from the start. There is one going on in Deptford where there is an old school. They are taking away a green space and it's a great wildlife space but there was no consultation with the school on this. In preserving the blues and the greens and creating walks, cycle paths and wider kerbs, the neighbourhood forums want more support. We put in certain objectives to protect people, social cohesion and spaces. In the meantime, we're expecting the local authority to support our objectives. If the GLA can have forums, those views must be taken on board at an early stage so that construction and policy makers cannot stray from that remix. In a semi-gated community there needs to be inclusion while gentrification is creating social cleansing.

### **Inclusive design covers various strands. Should socio economics be considered in the GLA?**

Yes. As soon as the National lottery is involved, there is a potential pricing in the framework that excludes people out of the service that we were trying to provide for.

Yes absolutely. I want to see how that is spatially expressed in the economic plan. And that if we were to call out all the strategies like transport and culture, we should see that London is serious about inclusive design, in all aspects.

**Yes, moving inclusive design to a bigger scale, and having that consistency.**

There is a list in the SPG a list about 20+ policies that includes the design, architecture, green space, creating social communities, etc. How is that expressed? We can look at LLBC and see clear priorities and schemes that were followed through until 2012 in terms of the way they were procuring space. How can that success be replicated in the opportunity area frameworks where the Mayor has influence in areas like Barking?

It's interesting to see how it cascade down. How does it cascade down to borough level?

In the northeast we used to be leading in this for 15 years until they were short of funds.

Is that down to implementation? Obviously the Mayor has an implementation strategy but I don't know to what degree has the inclusive design is embedded in infrastructure. There needs to be evidence to support this like how local boroughs do topic papers. We need to be topical in the way it is articulated.

**This is a subject about planning. The planning instructor moves to GLA level and the EIP inspects. Borough plans should conform to London plans.**

What does the Mayor control or what does he influence?

The thing about conformity is that they still need to check whether it's still relevant.

Design teams when working on retrofitting, they can satisfy the brief without being too brilliant or understanding what was required.

In Westminster, is there any form where they can demonstrate how they have passed the compliance?

**Enforcement is really on the planning side. After the housing standards review, planning would condition 10-90% in accordance with the London Planning and the planning condition was discharged and measured by building control. That is one way for solving lack of planning involvement.**

Maybe we should encourage planning authorities to flex their muscle over the planning stage access issue before it's too late. On areas such as footprint levels.

It has to a mesh of high standards first.

**We do try to include that in London plan policy.**

Design teams will often say that we will do that in detail later.

In Borough buses, one cannot on with a power scooter, which more people are using.

It all resonates with what we have on a heritage perspective with people's schemes. When they say we'll get the details later, there needs to be a behavioural shift in people so they can pre-empt details to achieve it. Situations with retrofitting like in a conservation area, the need for access and all the regulation are applied without looking at options and characteristics of the building that we enjoy first.

If we take that to a broader context like public realm. There needs to be strategic assessment - What impact does it have on mental health and mental wellbeing? How do we develop that? We are not thinking holistically.

I think it's important to get the Council of Lewisham to look at redesign of environment as open planning. Some of the job descriptions are within roles for local authorities. If they can recruit more roles to look at neighbourhoods and try to integrate that with asset management, etc.

It's the same with licensing, any high street in London are not accessible even after a complete refurbishment. Because refurbishment is not new planning therefore there is no more licensing involved?

In defence of the borough, it is a problem of resource, the lack of time and applications and skills. At the local level, accessing planning applications is a very difficult thing to do.

What could be a way to help locals in terms of priorities? With the councils, we need politicians to re-enforce national policy.

### **Training provided for council members. Is that something for the GLA to look at?**

It would be very useful for the GLA to go out and look at sub policy. There needs to be lobbying for house builders. There are maybe eight builders in London who build half the houses in London and who send applications based on profit rather than accessible design. The quality of applications that come forward needs to be greater.

### **We are going out to do housing standards training in affordable housing in the Borough.**

Can it not be expanded to design principles? Because that would change behavioural patterns that it is for all, not just disabled community.

One of the things we put forward in the Greenwich Lewisham constituency is to include an independent planner, building engineers to run a charrette which is addressing a hundred people. That targets the different groups that want link to everything. We also can have mini charters.

I think that is an interesting point because you can do training in different scenarios because London is not homogenous. It could be a park or a high street. We all interact in society on different baselines. There is also a heritage aspect and TfL can support this. You can go into central London boroughs but the outer borough has different issues.

Further alterations for ageing society. Culturally it's different even for older people who aren't homogenous.

We need to listen to each other's decisions.

**For me a lot of issues are mentioned in the SPG. Guidance is a very big chapter but it's not going to the local boroughs.**

We need to have people to helm training to go through the guide and explain to how we got to that decision, and then try to get different anecdotes because they have different things happen every day in different places.

We need pithy things. I wouldn't read this book because it is quite big and heavy. It's hard to carry it around

**We need three key points to sum this up**

1. Policy implementation - the SPG should be accessible and digestible, adequately resourced in terms of money and staffing. Can the GLA help us lobby for it? Get all the DM guys to have a basic knowledge about inclusive design and community collaborative planning

Do we still have community planning engagement to show due regard to equality act requirements? If you don't speak to people, you can't really show regard. There needs to be an access group to scrutinise and to challenge.

2. Meaningful early engagement with users. Embedding inclusive design principles at the GLA strategic and borough level.
3. Ideas of inclusive design need to have an incremental change that has an effect on environment. How can we address through this framework to address that and then draw it down to borough level on different responsibility. GLA regeneration for a wider family.

A point to add: When we think about environment we think of physical implementation but technology can also smooth everything out. The use of technology in the environment, once people have an induction, can have actual control of a managing kerb space, without any physical effort. It needs to be looked into.

# Inclusive Design

## Table 10 Session 2

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*Session 2, Table 10*

### **Rachel Smalley (Facilitator)**

Julia Park, Levitt Bernstein

Nicholas Plumb, The Challenge

Iain Mckinnon, Queen Elizabeth Park/LLDC

Philippa Jackson, London Borough of Camden

Carol Douet, Public Health Barnett

Glyn Kyle, Strategic Access Panel

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**This session is on inclusive design. The background is to make ideas and session that might spark off questions on whether inclusive design has a right approach. We are reviewing whether it is creating an inclusive environment for everyone.**

It would be useful to be able to see what Mayor said in his speech A City for All Londoners along with what Matthew Ryder said about inclusive design. If the specifics were in a written form, it would be great. Matthew Ryder did not feel to have the same kind of priority in the document.

**We are still trying to consolidate information. Thank you for bringing that up.**

There are different aspects of inclusive design. When designing building, the focus should be stairs so that able-bodied people are more inclined to use the stairs rather than hogging the lifts.

**Are you saying that all options should be given equal status, rather than prioritising one over the other? Often we hear the counter argument that the stairs are hidden. Do you mean that able-bodied people will always use the lift and disabled people can feel that they have less status?**

If the stairs are given focal point, able-bodied people are encouraged to take the healthy option of using the stairs.

I think it's about not forgetting the healthy lifestyle.

There has to be involvement about expected use, and additional training for designers so that it's not purely for design for design's sake and that form follows function.

**Awareness wise, we've got policies in the London plan. We provide something like the free planning. Does anyone have this experience reading the SPG? Is it too big?**

If you've got a generic understanding of it, it's a lot easier to process this information. If I show it to my planners they don't understand it and don't want to. The planners have no expectation to learn and know. They don't know enough about access and detail. The policy needs to be enforced and there needs to be training and someone needs to be championing the cause.

Public planning could work closer to Borough level.

**What's the best way to filter that down to Borough? We've got training and advice.**

Information needs to get filtered down.

**Background wise, inclusive design started with disabled design but now it's about parents with buggies, old people, women with children. Would it be helpful if the GLA included socio economic circumstances?**

In what way would you make spaces different with those factors?

**There's already affordable housing.**

Well, guide dogs and assistance dogs are not allowed in spaces.

**So, there are lots of rules to exclude people, instead of including people?**

In the physical built environment sense, it's hard to work around this.

On high street if you've got businesses that fall out on to the street, that makes it harder for disability access.

**Also, a difficulty for disabled people to circulate. There is too much protection of access space.**

Yes, there are benches from cafes onto the pavement. So the wheelchair often ends up on the road.

In street life and entertainment life, this is often overlooked.

**Potential disabled seating should be designated.**

When it comes to homes there could be the anticipation that someone might put their clothes outside their homes, and so leaving that extra space out in front with help.

Future proofing and designing space for people.

It's about the holistic view. If the council devices a shared used space. You can license cafes to have outside seating. But that involves different people, talking to each other.

**So, inclusive design is not just planning.**

People do need to work in partnership to make this happen. A lot of guidelines fall through the cracks

It's a hierarchy of control starting with legislation. Individual standards seem to have the lowest priority. The SPG as it stands is helpful as it stands but I wonder if it would really help if they are published in smaller parts, rather than have an encompassing policy that people think they ought to follow.

**The guidelines book could be streamlined?**

It's hard for designers to juggle huge amount of priorities on top of guidelines. When we design and design review, we rehearse the journey in the wheelchair and find out how many doors and barriers there are from start point to destination. These are physical training exercises. For example, Then I did training for venues, I asked them to get wheelchairs to encourage them to sit in it to go to the washroom. There would be better awareness this way than reading from a book.

### **Baseline understanding and awareness.**

Someone needs to give us an evidence based dimension.

### **It's how to get people to get it.**

If you want someone to do something, make it as easy as you can for them to do it.

### **Background for people to get it. Do people access British standards?**

I think as architects we charge by the page so clients do not really want us to design by 2000 pages of British standards. Personally, I think there is a place for best practice as the next stage. In the most friendly and understanding way we design toilets for example. Policy tends to be silent, for good reason.

I understand your desire. Designers and architects would want rules to be different. I wonder if there should be an ongoing education and large scale developments should allow for this.

### **I'm wondering if basic training helps. Having a lot of people in the industry not having contact with disabled people is a disadvantage.**

Education should start in early school and architecture schools. You can embed knowledge but you have to keep doing it.

Disabled people should be involved in the development of these schemes.

UDL training is always about making London more cycle friendly. But it's really not about cyclists. Not all disabled people are old. We have to make sure we don't think people are all in neat packages.

That baseline needs to develop. When it comes to people's homes we can't have universal accessibility.

Arguably the city encourages diversity and inclusion of people. It's more important than the physicality of it. A building can be beautiful but the environment surrounding it is another matter.

### **Such as the gaps between buildings and the walking space.**

Society's approach is that we can only do what is feasible. We need to find some way to encourage its mainstreaming.

### **Yes, we've got the training side of things in the boroughs. What else do you think we can do?**

Managing expectations. If you involve actual disabled people they would get an understanding why there are certain design standards and realise why there may be conflict between groups of people who have different needs.

There needs to be an update in terms of language, terminology and research of what is needed. Current practices are based on research done a long time ago. A more regular, recent system is needed.

### **Are you thinking of a more ergonomic side of things in the public realm?**

I'm thinking in terms of what the elite demands and how that influences what happens next.

You should be able have the similar experience through the Burroughs. There should be an equivocal means.

### **So that people know what to expect if there is consistency wherever they go.**

And it would be great to see the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to see it get done. What the LLDC did was great with the Paralympics. The inclusive design happened as the highest priority. The LLDC latched on to something so well that it became top of mind. If it is too large for architects a subject to deal with, then it should be deeply embedded throughout the profession, and not have these systems abolished after an event like the Paralympics was over.

The navigation was stellar during the Paralympics. There were all those games and the stations because there were volunteers. People from the community were getting involved.

You can use case studies and examples on these issues and topics.

They can be useful. Every project has at least 2 design reviews and we all look at them with the landscape team. I'll shed light on a particular dwelling space and ask someone with a grandparent if the location and aspects of the space is good enough. The old rules have dated compliances that had dining tables on the other side of the room far from the kitchen where food is prepared. It doesn't make sense for someone in a wheelchair. We can't just be drawing out rules.

What language would you use other than inclusive design?

There needs to be ratings for how accessible buildings are.

Targets and stars are ideal because it gives people something to aspire.

### **Should we be looking at a baseline or the highest standard? At the moment to make it more user-friendly, we have a policy.**

I think the word highest level is dangerous, because the word suggests the best. And not everybody can be the best except for a handful. I think there's a huge disconnect what we think we're getting and what we get as an end users. GLA's job is to make policy but that is where it stops.

**Yes that's where it stops as opposed to managing the whole process.**

That is a turnoff and it makes us cynical about the policies. It exposes architects to liabilities. The diligent companies have to say why they did not meet what the policy demands. I think that it's very important to make sure that the basics are right and that we've got the three-tier standard. We make sure that access housing is affordable to wheelchair users. In the private sector they are not likely to ensure that happens.

**Actually the GLA could help wheelchair users to own wheelchair accessible housing. I'm glad you mentioned that.**

What Waltham Forest did, they make sure that houses are potentially wheelchair accessible.

We should make it mandatory in marketing.

There's potential there.

**If someone says they want an m43 housing, they should be able to access it**

I think open data visualisation is becoming mandatory and it needs to be made available.

GLA has got data on what's promised but do you have data on what's delivered?

**We do. I need three points. At the moment we have one around basic awareness on training. I've got points from design to completion stage. There are also conversations around inclusion and consistency throughout London.**

Enforcement of policy?

**I've got a point on London policy and how it filters down to Borough plan level.**

Could the GLA fund a group of consultants which architects can phone up as a helpline? We need well informed pragmatic consultants to call up.

It takes a lot of the stress away if someone can help us out.

Sometimes it's boils down to having a good or bad M&E engineer. Some of them only claim they know what they are doing.

We hope that the design review will think about the basic idea of usability. Given that not all of them empathise, we need to find some ways to encourage that. Why does society arguably consider pregnant women, and women with children of a different status as disabled people? We are putting professions like architecture under a lot of pressure. Sadly a lot of designers are not very robust to consider spatial requirements.