

A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS

An Inclusive City Growth Workshop

11th November 2016, 9.30 – 13.00

Social Mobility, Equality and Fairness **Table 2 Session 1**

Facilitator in bold facilitator – comments in bold

Respondents in regular text

These notes are a summary of the conversation

Session 1, Table 2

Dan Drillsma-Milgrom (Facilitator)

Sue Johnson, GLA

Ian McKinnon, Queen Elizabeth Park/London Legacy Development Corporation

Sufina Ahmad, City Bridge Trust

Jon Evans, Borough of Wandsworth

Farah Elahi, Runnymede Trust

Dr Yasminah Beebeejaun, Senior Lecturer, University College London

Richard Lee, Just Space

Moussah Hadad, Child Poverty Group

Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy, London Borough of Haringey

Brenda Downes, Lewisham Irish Community Centre

My name is Dan. London is a diverse but unequal city. What should the GLA's role be in helping develop opportunities? How do we understand the gaps between Londoners?

Brenda Downes. Lewisham Irish Community Centre. My work is with the travel community, all nomadic Travellers.

Director of public health for Haringey. Corporate lead for Fair and Equal. We've done a lot of work analysing the key inequalities in the borough and how we can address that.

Moussah Hadad, Child Poverty Action Group.

Richard Lee from community network Just Space. We produced the Community-Led Plan for London. It has lots of metrics that Matthew was calling for.

Senior lecturer at University College London. I work on ethnicity, planning and equality, some work on feminism, community organising.

Farah Elahi, Runnymede Trust, equalities in London. Looking at indicators of inequality.

Jon Evans, assistant executive for Wandsworth and Richmond councils.
Sufina Ahmad. Heading up development of funding strategies. I worked in policy nationally and locally.

Ian. QE Olympic Park. Senior design manager, working on inclusive design, making sure it's accessible.

Sue Johnson. Leading the inequality strategy.

Any views on what it might be best to focus on?

Equalities framework. A quick update might be helpful.

We're developing it with the intention of publishing the end of this year or more likely the beginning of next year. It will be a draft document to consult on further, with the intention of publishing a more robust strategy in June next year. The Mayor's office is keen to get its own house in order so it can go to the rest of the world and say, "This is what we want you to do," and we're doing it first. It covers growing up in London, economy in workplaces and communities.

This is an ongoing process. We hope it will encompass the ambitions of the Mayor's manifesto, but is a first step to construct something we can measure and report on regularly. We can work on it iteratively.

We have an obligation to produce the equality report, but we can update and advise the framework going forward. It won't be set in stone. It will be built on year on year.

With opportunities to engage and consult. Any perspectives on the priorities to look at and improve fairness?

This year we published a report on ethnic inequalities in London. For the BAME community, unemployment and housing were important. There has been good progress in education inequalities, but that's not translating into employment opportunities, let alone pay gaps. In housing, vulnerability to homelessness, overcrowding affects quality of housing, but we're also concerned about the insecurity. I know housing is an issue for everyone in London, but the additional insecurities the community faces isn't thought of enough.

There is such a divide between super rich and super poor. I don't think any other city is as unequal as London. We talk a lot about assets. A lot of assets seek to address the inequalities, but language here is important. I like that we're talking about fairness and equality. There is a need now for good government, which looks at certain things civil society will be able to do. Run good centres, work with marginalised groups. Unless you have good government pulling the necessary levers so corporation tax is applied as it should be, or the way housing is distributed – sorry if this is maybe too aspirational, but there is a role to play. We are the most devolved. There is a role for the GLA in applying pressure for good, strong government. The level is unsustainable.

If you look for the data on wealth inequality in London, they compare the 90th percentile to the 10th percentile. London is more unequal compared to the UK, but the level is relatively stable. The real drivers of income, wealth and inequality are right at the extremes – the top 1% where you see spiralling wealth, and inequality at the

bottom as well. It's hard to get robust measures of. What can the GLA do to better understand it?

On the housing issue, child poverty rate more than doubled. The other is the link between housing and social opportunity. The cost of one's housing in London is a bigger influence on the standard of living than what you earn. It's a function of inheritance in some form or another. It would be interesting to capture the effect housing costs have on your standard of living. Social mobility can be promoted in London by giving more people access to secure and affordable housing. You either have that at the minute or you don't. It's predetermined.

On the work we've done, this is about systematic discrimination of groups of people with particular characteristics. That's important when you talk about fairness. It's our responsibility. You have a life course. Multiple discrimination. If you're disadvantaged as a child, that builds through your housing, your education and on through. We're struggling with young, black boys particularly and their incredible feeling of insecurity, lack of safety and poor relationship with the police. Why is policing causing them so much fear? It turns on the head traditional narratives. What can we do to turn that around? Violence against girls – another issue on how policing needs to change. In terms of housing, the biggest challenges are in the private renting sector now. Our ability to deal with those is limited. Poor condition, poor practices, overcrowding, lack of security.

Private landlord registrations, provision being cut in the borough so there is no recourse for tenants. Nobody in local councils to engage with a private landlord. Evictions are up in the borough I work in. Local housing allowance/benefit leaves people in shortfall. The tenancy agreement might say £1,000 a month. A verbal agreement, I'll take what I can get. There is an accumulation of arrears that means an automatic section 8 eviction. A lack of accommodation, rise of homelessness. It constantly comes back to overpriced, non-regulated. New builds are not affordable. We talk about building general mixed communities. We had that in central London until people were moved to Margate and elsewhere. Diversity in the boroughs is actually falling because people can't live there.

I don't think that's universally the case in London, in terms of diversity falling.

In terms of not just the obvious ethnicity and culture. You were talking about life course. Older people, people with large families being forced out. I live in Lambeth. The closer you get to zone one – they've got zone one and they're taking zone two. Soon we won't be able to live in zone three either.

The economics are changing. There needs to be greater accessibility. There is something about changing the narrative. I'm all for greater accessibility in more affordable housing. We're at a loss still, having to subsidise one side and not doing enough on the other side with extreme wealth. It's a time for bold thinking. We talk about the example of young black men and institutional racism and ways of thinking. For women and girls, we see magistrates passing judgement differently to men. There needs to be a bold narrative that comes out at all levels, not just GLA on civil society getting its message out. We can't influence national media, but we can influence local media. Something is missing at the moment. People don't understand the value lending has to the UK and beyond. Something around the story of London needs to change, a recognition that a lot of institutional thinking doesn't tally with the reality of individuals.

On good, strong government, we talk about governance a lot. For us, what actually can be the role of civil society? Recognising within that the level, so it's not dominated by NGO organisations. We value the real voluntary associations. How is their role valued within the governance of London? The big question for Just Space is how can the Mayor of London ensure there is recognition and a voice for all these issues we raise? The housing issue is arguably the biggest challenge. The Mayor produces the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The Mayor has a working group on this to design how it will be done. How do you carry out an assessment of housing needs across London? Black communities, Gypsy Travellers are not represented. Private renting sector groups aren't represented. This is the start of producing an assessment of need, which then informs the housing strategy and policies. If there is no voice within the whole preparation, I would argue something is fundamentally wrong. Under the previous Mayor, the conclusion was they didn't need to assess Gypsy and Traveller need at all. It sounds outrageous. Why? It's quite a small group.

Not statistically.

I agree with you. "Let's leave this to the boroughs." They were explicitly excluded, but many other groups – and BAME is not a minority if you add it all up – it's a small section within the Mayor's strategy. Why? There is no voice and representation on those issues in City Hall. One can apply this to many levels of policy.

I'm keen to hear if people have thoughts on other places where people perceive a lack of voice. Economics fairness work was included in the manifesto. The equalities framework is another example.

I've been a long time at the GLA. In the administration before Boris, there was a group with representation from the travelling community, so the voice used to be there. On the equalities framework, Sadiq has already signed up to this. We will also consider socioeconomic policies and cover fairness. I see nodding heads, so I guess you think it's a good way to go.

On structural issues and being explicit about what the issue is, we spoke a bit about criminal justice. We know Theresa May was against stop and search, and figures have gone down dramatically. Proportionality hasn't actually changed that much. It's not just looking at the policy in isolation, but tackling the roots. Institutional racism or discrimination against groups, it's not just about surface-level change but getting to the root. We can end stop and search, but the real issue is improving relationships and challenging perceptions. On housing, one of the challenges we have is poor data. We have some data around people on social housing, but now more people are privately renting and we don't have data on who those people are, what kind of arrangements they have. It makes it quite difficult to monitor. We don't follow people, so we don't know who is leaving or staying in London. We can only follow people on social housing and look at overall numbers. We can see how numbers are changing, but we don't know everything. That's one of the challenges, not having enough data. A lot of the data previously produced around housing is no longer collected.

Can you be more specific?

On overcrowding, a survey was published every few years and that's no longer done. That's an important metric. People working in local authorities need to understand the needs of communities.

There is work to be done to regain lost ground.

There was stuff that was never collected but should be. Local authorities experience rapid change. Need better data on who the communities are. If we could even get a better picture from surveys already done, it would be useful.

I know a borough that no longer collects data on social properties. If you say two rooms on the ground floor can be a bedroom, there's no need.

There is a lack of evidence on what works. Boroughs are poor at sharing initiatives that have worked and what hasn't worked. In Wandsworth, we had a mentoring scheme to bring young black males closer to work. When we tried to implement that, we found the world is littered with mentoring schemes that have gone wrong, and the learning has never been shared. We struggled hugely to find what works. We're not great at sharing what works.

Potential role for the GLA there.

Potentially, I think so. It's also about what hasn't worked.

Central deposit for bids that have gone in. This is the funding bid we put in. This is why we think it failed. I think of them as libraries, places like that.

A definite lack, particularly where things have gone wrong.

Universities should do more. They publish research but it costs a lot to read it. Make it public access. There is a group in York working on the super rich. Rowan Atkinson is leading research on the impact on the London economy of super-rich people. The private renting sector is a real issue. UK has regulation and security, but places like Berlin have much better controls. On the equalities strategy, under the previous Mayor we went backwards. I've been analysing equality impact statements and there is no inequality planning in the UK. It's the worst thing I've ever read. The GLA can give guidance and advice to people who have no experience. They say they treat everybody equally – something from the 1970s. The Project Guardian work with the British Transport Police and TfL was one of the best projects I've worked with. Laura Bates – reporting sexual harassment on transport networks has risen and is taken seriously. It's viewed well nationally, so really good things can be done.

When Ken was in office I had colleagues producing supplementary planning guidance. It's still out there, but the previous administration didn't promote it. We can revisit that.

In terms of socioeconomic rights, UK is poor on the language of rights. There is a question whether that needs to be built into the framework. They put out a scathing report on it. It's gone backwards. A question of whether that's another element.

What would that look like, the equalities framework?

It shifts responsibility in what is the city's responsibility to citizens and demonstrating it realises key socioeconomic rights for groups. It gets around the group legislation that people focus on. It's a perversity about the equalities legislation.

I agree with that. These protected groups get preferential treatment. The privilege other people experience isn't discussed or it's left unsaid.

I want to come in on the equality impact assessment. This is a key tool, but actually it's not very well informed. I think this is why we get so many reports. It's not just neighbourhood planning, it's all planning. You get an equality impact assessment, just a tick box to assess if the policy that is proposed is in the view of those looking at it fit for purpose. Two problems. One, it's trying to sign off a policy proposal rather than starting from what's happening out there in terms of these issues and what policies are required to meet this advantage. It's the other way around. The signing off is done in a desktop manner, using professional expertise of people rather than gathering the views of the disadvantaged communities and the representative bodies. This is why we get these kinds of results. It's not real life, it's a desktop exercise.

In terms of the Mayor's strategies, the work has already started on the first stage. Who here is involved? Who knows about what is being proposed? They're called integrated impact assessments. It's one strand, but picking up on all other types, health or habitat or whatever. The Mayor's integrated impact assessments for the developing strategies, how are these communicated to the people here? How do we inform them from the start? Objectives are already agreed, already the policies to assess the Mayor's strategy going forward are put in place by the team at GLA level, without our input. We'll be consulted down the line, but on a framework that is already set. On the Gypsy and Traveller issue it's rare to see any specific monitoring questions. Clearly there should be, and there would be if everyone was consulted. Various groups fall off. There are huge issues on the mechanism of impact assessment.

The GLA can encourage people to do equality impact assessments. They were brought in to remind people that there are strands people need to meet. On social mobility, we spoke about employment, but a big issue now is in-work poverty. Who is in employment or not in employment, it can fudge the issue. People are working but still not managing to make ends meet. What can the GLA do to look at contracts, London living wage so that people can live, social mobility?

What will happen with the devolution agenda, employment or training programmes is the big unknown. We know there are work programmes with some limited success, various groupings of boroughs, health and wellbeing. Wandsworth in central London. They're all trying to work out the best way to get people into work and break down barriers. That's key moving forward. Devolution happens anyway.

What will happen with the devolution agenda, employment or training programmes is the big unknown. We know there are work programmes with some limited success, various groupings of boroughs, health and wellbeing. Wandsworth in central London. They're all trying to work out the best way to get people into work and break down barriers. That's key moving forward. Devolution happens anyway.

Services follow that.

Of course, but the driver is around business rates and arguably we need more balance there so social issues come up.

There's a point on voice and ensuring we capture different voices at the right point. A good point was made around data and the role of the GLA capturing not just data but the evidence on what works and crucially doesn't work. We've discussed equalities a lot. What is the takeaway point for the equalities framework?

It's getting the balance of systematic discrimination against groups, but also how you tackle proportions. We talk about super rich and super poor, but we also can't just focus on the most vulnerable groups. We have to look across society and get that vibrant mix of London that people want to be part of. In some central areas, you get just the two ends, but you can't just focus on the bottom end. What are the policies that will make a positive difference without perverse outcomes?

Economic fairness?

Great to hear you're doing it. We can have twelve indicators for economic fairness.

Access to justice. The capacity to hold employers or local authorities to account. I don't know if the GLA has capacity to look into that. People being able to seek redress. I know it's central government. There's no point having lofty ideals on fairness when, if they aren't being done, people can't seek redress. If local authorities aren't held to account legally, often they won't do it, often because they're stretched.

It affects people's capability to participate and contribute. It's all implementing processes. They've been to the landlord to say they don't pay for it if they have a rat problem. The CAB say there is nothing they can do. Housing and public health issues where people say the local council is not helping. They have a need now. What is happening at the next level? Are there other policies we can use as the people on the floor? People are stopping to participate because they bash their heads against the same wall all the time. We used to have local council with pest control, and not charging people below a certain level of income. Now they charge everybody. If you haven't got the money, you don't get access to basics. Something in the GLA policies where they say, "We will take responsibility that you need to be doing this."

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That's an important one to get right.

It might be better if it was just ignored, or left to the local authority. It's the next level, leadership.

Economic fairness is in the manifesto, around workplace rights and what it is to be a good employer.

What is the consequence? We have good legislation compared to a lot of countries. If you can't enforce it, it's not worth the paper it's written on. I know how stretched councils are. I don't know how they function, really. They have to make decisions. This is not an area that can be compromised on. From central government, there isn't sensitivity. More local authorities making changes to people's lives.

Devolution of the social fund. When benefits don't come through or they have a crisis, the system is far less good than it used to be. The quality of local welfare assistance. Scotland has a welfare fund that provides a certain level of service. That could happen in London.

We're better at understanding the triggers that push people into poverty. We know there is something around emergency welfare. Lots of boroughs do great work on local welfare schemes. EWP, short-term benefits, the waiting periods.

Some happen at a local level. Tower Hamlets did a good job on DHP. Other boroughs did less well of a job.

Inclusive City Workshop

Table 2 Session 2

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Dan Drillsma-Milgrom (Facilitator)

Sue Johnson, GLA

Fawad Bhatti, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Sarah Chaplin, Hackney Council

Nathan Yole

Gordon Deuchars, Age UK London

Tracey Lazard, Inclusion London

Fizza Qureshi, Migrants Rights Network

Patricia Roman, Latin Elephant and Loughborough University

Paul Bonham, Arts Council England

Shane Britton, London Borough of Newham

Today we're trying to understand the role of the GLA and better understand the gaps between Londoners.

Patricia Roman. We work to increase participation of migrant economies in the London Plan.

Tracey, deaf and disabled people's organisations. We do a lot of policy and campaign works.
Sarah Chaplin, Hackney Council, tenancy management support.

Fawad Bhatti, strategy officer in social inclusion.

Sue Johnson, leading on the equality strategy.

Are there any areas you would like to focus on?

Equalities framework.

We're developing an interim framework with a more robust one published in June.

The interim will just be live from now until June?

The intention is to publish at the end of this year or beginning of next year.

The first iteration is to capture the ambitions as a first step, and then we'll develop it for as long as it takes. It will be iterative.

We will review the framework every year and build on it. It will be ongoing.

I'm interested in the definition of fairness. A lot of social equality is discussed. How is fairness embedded into planning?

We can look at what that will specifically look like to capture that experience.

My hope is the focus Matthew will have on community engagement means we will get intelligence and qualitative information that will inform policy additionally to the metrics.

Placing a value on metrics does not mean dismissing qualitative data. It's striking a balance.

They build outside the HRA. On regeneration, some things that you think won't benefit do. In Stratford, footfall has massively increased.

It could so easily have gone the other way. It's a risk communities are taking. Westfield doesn't have independent shops at the end of the day.

The role of the GLA can be in capturing data, but also in capturing what works and what doesn't work. Stratford is a good example.

Is it Canary Wharf with no links, or is it city jobs but bringing a lot of economic growth? You place people previously unemployed into good jobs in Westfield, skills and people competing. It was a poor area without opportunities.

Great that you're creating jobs, but what about businesses that fail because you support corporate? It's about having a balance to support the local community while bringing in more wealth.

It's too often seen as a zero sum game. It is making sure you do it well.

Consultations need to change. Communities are consulted as a tick-box exercise. Developers are coming, don't argue with it. You don't listen to the community's voice. What do you want? To make it better. That question isn't being asked. "We have three proposals. Tell me which one you prefer." The business says, "No, this is what I need." They don't listen, so people stop going to these consultation exercises. The other thing is more personal, but I am employed at Loughborough University. It's heartless. These places do not exist beyond working hours. We aren't producing public spaces for the interaction of people. People should be at the heart.

You can't protest outside City Hall because that ground is private.

Same in Canary Wharf. Same outside Westfield, actually.

It's also about cultural fairness, institutions. Fairness dominates the agenda of developments.

Sian Berry of the Green Party lobbied for the Mayor to change practices around shortlisting, removing gender prefixes. She came to us and we're now doing it. We the local authorities, to a lesser or greater extent, do follow the GLA's decisions, so please bear that in mind. You can have a bold view on these issues.

Standing up for fairness, equality and inclusion is vital. We haven't had that for eight years. It needs to be in depth and consistent. We want to hear more than just, "London for all." That's vital, but it has to champion the detail too.

Have Sadiq out and about. It's about who he is and what he represents. It's about aspiration, getting people who want to do something to realise they can do it. A lot of it is a desire to succeed. He embodies that himself, and it's about using City Hall to get people to think differently.

It's also about leadership to national government. Theresa May stated some stuff and Sadiq needs to challenge her. If you can't get out of bed to leave your house, forget it. He needs to really challenge her to deliver. There might be more of a willingness to look at infrastructure development here in the city.

Ensuring greater fairness in regeneration and what precedes regeneration, and different views are captured. The ability to lead by example with tangible successes. Engagement. Anything on economic fairness?

You need to see how welfare reform impacts on communities. Disabled Londoners have had a 29% cut in their income – double any other community in the last five years. You need to know that, and it needs to shape what you do.

If that work just focuses on the labour market it misses a lot of people.

From the Arts Council, in London you have to work in some capacity to have the freedom to be an artist to develop different skills. We live in a city that generates massive national wealth but doesn't necessarily look after residents' self-development. Loads of musicians are based in the cities. Fairness of freedom almost to be able to innovate and participate.

The arts are open to the wealthy. How can you find ways to open those opportunities to other people?

We have a big concentration of higher education. With tuition fees going up, accessibility to knowledge has become less fair. These institutions don't have community engagement strategies, as far as I'm aware.

Will you ever really get everyone to buy into fairness when you have a corporate sector that holds so much wealth? You need to talk to them about how they will bring fairness and how that will benefit Londoners. They're not going away.

There will be a piece around employment practices, and paying the living wage will play a significant part.