



COLLECTIVE  
COMMUNITY  
ACTION

# A NETWORK CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

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The Bussey Building and Copeland Park saved from demolition by Peckham Vision community action, [see page 22]. Photograph 2018 by Jerome Favre.

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Great places are sustained and created when they involve the communities that use them. But today, communities are still under-represented and under-valued in the process of change and the way that places are made and managed.

We all need to tackle:

- The lack of understanding or responsibility on the part of the professions and agencies most closely involved in urban change.
- Inadequate engagement practices.
- Uneven education about the role and responsibilities of citizens for professionals and community groups alike.
- Ineffective benchmarks, targets and metrics to judge community consultation.
- A lack of value and focus on social structures and their contribution to the design process.
- Changes in planning policy that appear solely focused on delivery.
- Approaches to engagement that prioritise PR in place of genuine dialogue.

In all of this, it's the community who suffer. They are often payed lip service and considered a tactical impediment rather than a force for enlightened and equitable change, able to guide design in such a way that the resulting places have real social, cultural and economic resonance – places that everyone is able to use and enjoy.

If this is going to change, there must be collective action. First, we have to build awareness of the current deficit and bad practice. Second, we need to acknowledge and learn from great practice. And third, we must galvanize change.

Democracy relies on governance acting on the expressed will of the electorate. This 'will' must be educated and informed, then clearly and unequivocally evidenced in projects that recast our cities, towns and villages for the better. Design must become a tool of co-production and shared vision-building rather than effectively a means of exclusion.

Now more than ever, communities need the respect and support of professionals to create great places together and government bodies need to listen. Amidst all the change and tumult going on around us, we have a golden opportunity to create a city that provides something for everyone, with design acting as a powerful force for social and environmental good.

## 2. WHO WE ARE: COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY ACTION

An assembly of individuals with a shared goal – to discuss, communicate, provoke and propose the changes needed to ensure communities are at the heart of urban change for the better.

We are a group of citizens, consultants, educators and built environment professionals striving to advance the role that communities play in shaping the city.

Our aim is to define the actions required to transform the challenges in nurturing social, economic and ecological sustainability and value with effective community involvement. These actions must learn from, benefit and inform the communities themselves, the professions and professionals that collaborate with communities, and those involved in the built environment sector who are yet to forge a positive relationship with communities.

In our discussions with citizen groups, architects, housing associations, campaigners, local regeneration consultants, developers and all those involved in shaping the city, we have been clear from the outset that our conversations must lead to action, and that the challenges that are voiced from the diversity of the group must also permit the sharing of ideas and proposals for how to transform them.

We have focused on two particular transformations that we seek to bring about and further through collaboration with others - advocacy and education.

Advocacy in these areas is critical in order to position its value and to champion the process of change.

For this reason we are calling for a Mayoral Statement of Community Involvement (MSCI) that will set a strategic expectation for standards of effective and meaningful community involvement across London's planning system and in connection with public services, in clear, measurable terms. In doing so, it would also act as a vehicle to focus the actions of public sector bodies on the consultative and social value

policies promoted by the Mayor, particularly those set out in the (ITP) London Plan<sup>1</sup>.

Such a bold Statement will ensure that the powers and actions of the Mayor are focused on ensuring that change in the urban environment benefits all, with the involvement of all.

The changes that are required won't happen quickly. In response to this, we are promoting the establishment of education and training programmes to facilitate the exponential learning curve that is required for the public and professionals to help shape their city.

This includes a five tier approach, including primary school, secondary school, higher education, professional practice and the public. Each will be taught by educators who are active citizens, practitioners and consultants engaged in the built environment.

The primary school training programme will be proposed as part of the current London curriculum, and the Citizenship curriculum which applies across primary and secondary programmes.

By focusing on advocacy and education as the output of this first round of discussions by this group, we believe we can begin to catalyse meaningful change in addressing the currently poor practice of community engagement, consultation and facilitation.

As a group, we want to see a future London where those that shape the city are reflective and inclusive of those that live in it and run businesses there, demonstrating our values and commitment to a greater social purpose of the built environment professions.

If you are interested in becoming an active member of this group, in joining the conversation or simply sharing examples of good practice, please contact us at [hello@collectivecommunityaction.co.uk](mailto:hello@collectivecommunityaction.co.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> The ITP London Plan is the Intend to Publish London Plan. It is awaiting some revisions to attend to the Secretary of State's formal comments.

# 3. MAYORAL STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Mayoral Statement of Community Involvement (MSCI) will be a document and policy guide that will set out the Mayor's public duties and obligations as regards urban change and development within the Greater London Area. It will specifically seek to ensure that urban change and development are founded on clear and agreed evidence of real need and desire, developed in full accord with local people and their representatives and the public interest.

The MSCI must be succinct, easy to read, commensurate with current and breaking planning and environmental policies and ambitions. It must ensure that local demographics are faithfully reflected in consultative processes and public dialogue.

It should act as an incentive, or unlock such incentive through access to GLA funds, grants or loans that promote sustainable design, inclusive processes, multidisciplinary problem solving and democratic development that clearly shows local public support and the measurable social and community benefits that will flow from implementation.

The MSCI will do the following:

- It will describe how urban planning can be openly, fairly and democratically advanced with reference to good practice in the UK and elsewhere. It will show how plan making approaches can be demystified, and how the public interest can be transparently maintained.
- It will promote the innovative social and spatial policies of the ITP London Plan, particularly: its strengthened commitments on public engagement and collaboration at an early stage and throughout the development of plans, strategies and regeneration programmes; that regeneration tackles poverty, disadvantage, inequality, and their causes, for the benefit of existing residents and businesses; that needs assessments of social infrastructure, health, social care, play and recreational facilities inform such plans; and that this should involve local communities, a wide variety of formal and informal providers, children and young people.

- It will set out fair processes for disposing of, leasing out and developing public assets that fall under the Mayor's purview (particularly land and buildings) with a commitment to ensuring that any such projects are equitable and act as exemplars of ethical development, democratic processes and public consultation and engagement.
- It will discuss mechanisms and processes which should be supported by local authorities to broaden the scope of meaningful involvement covering inclusive methodologies and approaches, innovative forms of exchange, digital technologies and effective complaints procedures.
- It will establish benchmarks for acceptable practices in terms of public consultation, minority ethnic representation, metrics and measures of involvement, the use of robust evidence bases; also the need for all Statements of Community Involvement to provide proof regarding local endorsement of proposals (whether they be policies or projects) through key,

recognised community groups and amenity groups, and those people who do not usually engage in planning processes.

- It will ensure that Freedom of Information is upheld and that undemocratic processes, such as political lobbying are either resisted or made a matter of public record.

## 4. COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY TRAINING AND OUTREACH

Enabling a more open, fairer and participatory process for communities to be fully embedded in the shaping of the city is a core focus in addressing current issues with the planning process. This requires new ways of working - of practicing and learning - for all those involved from a professional and public position.

The Collaborative Community Training and Outreach initiative seeks to identify key components that would deliver the learning to drive these changes. These include:

- Demonstration of the impact of place on quality of life, and the benefits and impact of collective involvement, thus building the appeal to get involved.
- An approach to multidisciplinary learning and practice, including those citizen groups and disciplines currently under-represented in planning but with valuable contributions to make.
- An understanding of the different roles and legislative processes involved, to aid individuals' involvement and impact.
- A rebalancing of participants involved to ensure equal value for contributions from professionals and the public.

- New tools to enable new practice – collective mission statements, community asset programmes, digital tools, leadership programmes.

These components will be applied to five tiers of public and professional engagement, which will include programmes for primary school, secondary school, higher education, professional practice and the public. The primary school training programme will be proposed as part of the current London curriculum and the Citizenship curriculum which applies across primary and secondary programmes.

Each will be taught by educators who are active citizens, practitioners and consultants engaged in the built environment. Collaborations with existing educational organisations and universities will be sought to enable impact across a broad range of audiences.

Examples of good practice will be included in all training material to ensure we are learning from others and demonstrating that change is possible, impactful and holds the potential for further change and growth.



## 5. GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The examples in this section illustrate practices put forward by individual members of the group as promising signs of the changes which are needed.

### JUST SPACE

**Category:** Community empowerment  
**Collaborators:** 80 community groups, campaigns and concerned independent organisations

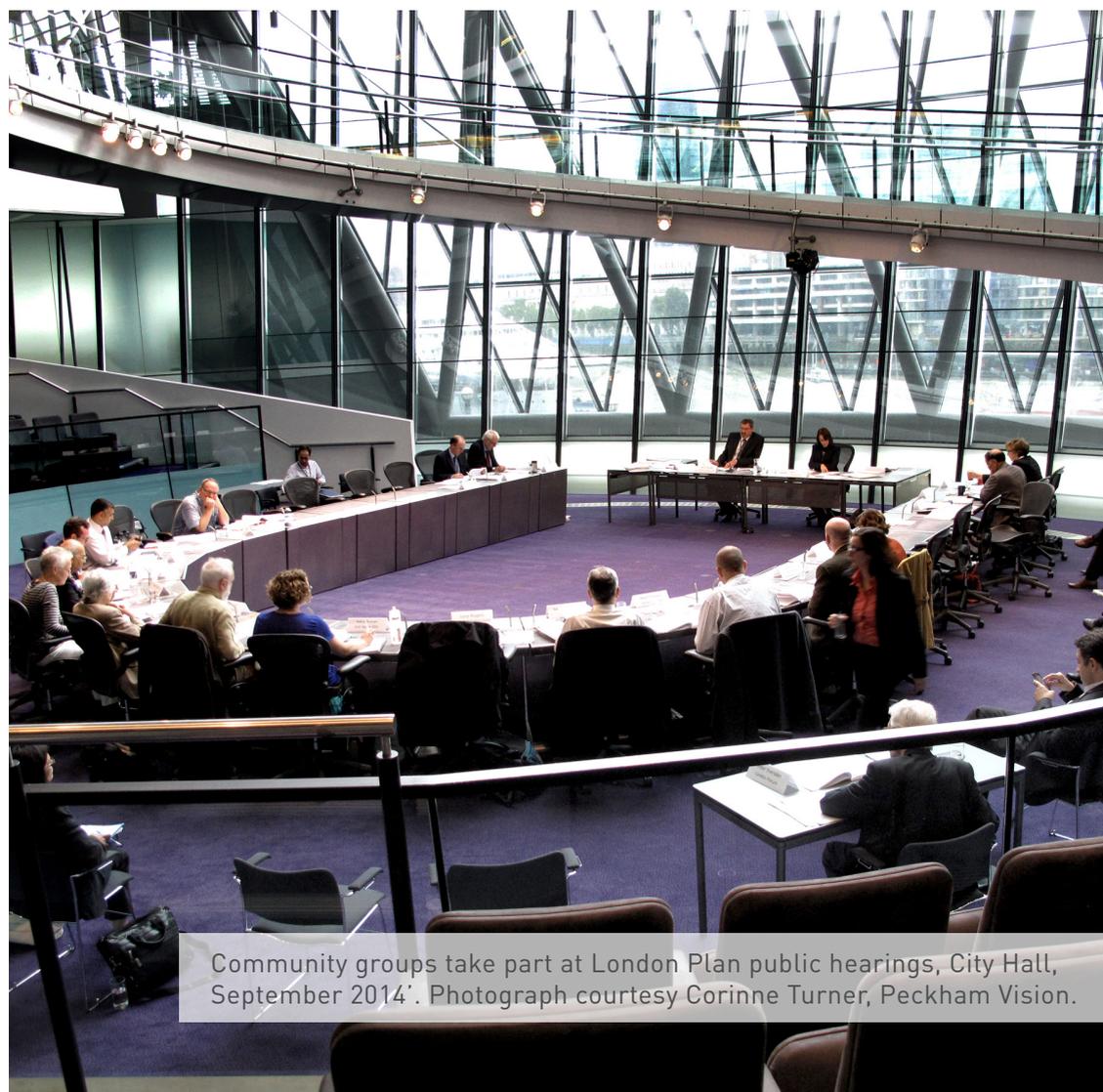
Just Space is presently an informal alliance of around 80 community groups, campaigns and concerned independent organisations which came together some 12 years ago to act as a grass-roots voice for Londoners on the London Plan. Its aim is to improve public participation in planning, to ensure that policy is fairer towards communities – in a system dominated by technical language, vested interests, entrenched inequalities and disengagement. It does this through member involvement and mutual support on projects that focus on their priorities, aided by links to some London Universities and London wide campaigning organisations. Most of the relationships reflect decades of community connections and involvement in each other's networks, sectors and organisations .

By giving communities a respected, stronger voice in planning and housing at the policy level, this can really influence and shape

policy and practice. Just Space is now a respected lead organisation in facilitating and supporting community group involvement in the London Plan plan-making process, participating fully in all Examinations in Public since 2007, achieving a presence by community groups of one third of all participants in 2010. To seize the initiative, in 2016 Just Space published the ground breaking, community originated, "Towards a Community-Led Plan for London" setting out key principles and proposals for a fairer, more liveable and sustainable London. It is now aiming to produce a 2nd edition with new chapters and new policy ideas that reflect the rich diversity of community contributions to the Examination in Public in 2019.



Gypsies & Travellers active at London Plan public hearings 2010 Photo courtesy London Gypsy & Traveller Unit



Community groups take part at London Plan public hearings, City Hall, September 2014'. Photograph courtesy Corinne Turner, Peckham Vision.



City Council Meeting

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING

**Category:** Community empowerment  
**Collaborators:** Aaron Landsman, Mallory Catlett, Jim Findlay.

City Council Meeting was conceived after a particularly well-performed battle about zoning at the Portland, Oregon City Hall.

The project takes as its departure point the formal structures of local government. An emphasis on the formal elements helps us engage, play, critique and enliven, among other things.

The Mayor and council sit behind the table, regarding us; citizens and functionaries address them with their backs to us; everyone's faces play on the video monitors in the room, online and on TV. We have access to power at the same time as we're separate from it.

How do you know how to act? You can't possibly be up on all the procedures and you are definitely not in charge, but you know that this is where you are supposed to come if you have something to say, an idea for change, a grievance. Stand if you agree with something, but don't speak unless you signed up to.

City Council Meeting is created by writer Aaron Landsman, director Mallory Catlett and designer Jim Findlay. They have delivered local meetings from Bismarck to San Antonio, Portland to New York. There is something about being in the room we find galvanizing – here is a connection to power we can see. Sometimes it's power depicted by a splendid dais in an impressive room; at others it's a few cheap curtains, a couple flags and some velvet ropes installed where there used to be a bank or a classroom or a basement.



Left: Theresa Magee, Wesley Estate RA chairing GUA Community Conference November 2014, Right: GUA/JPT Community Charrette December 2015 (Photos courtesy Eva Psychrani GUA)



## THE GRAND UNION ALLIANCE

**Category:** Community empowerment  
**Collaborators:** The Grand Union Alliance, London Tenants Federation, Old Oak Development Corporation, Just Space

The Grand Union Alliance (GUA) is a network of resident and community groups, voluntary organisations, individuals and small businesses from, in and around the Old Oak & Park Royal area of North West London, and is named after the canal that runs through the area. The GUA is focussed on influencing the Mayoral Development Corporation's large-scale development plans for Old Oak & Park Royal, wanting 'to see plans developed that will sustain existing communities and enhance what local people currently value in their neighbourhoods.'

Since being established in 2014 by the London Tenants Federation (grant

funded by Trust for London), then supported by UCL and Just Space, its work has raised public awareness of development plans, produced its own community based vision, participated strongly at the Examination in Public into the draft Local Plan, and proposed a set of 12 'Ground Rules' to guide how the Corporation and developers involve and engage with the local community.

It secured a substantial degree of success with 10 of the 12 proposed Ground Rules being adopted in full or in part within the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation's (OPDC) Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This Ground Rules approach could be adapted to form the basis of a potential Mayoral SCI, which could be used to demonstrate a good practice example to London local planning authorities in the development of their SCIs.

## HACKNEY WICK & FISH ISLAND CULTURAL INTEREST GROUP

**Category:** Community Empowerment

**Collaborators:** Hackney Wick and Fish Island Cultural Interest Group and multiple local stakeholders

The Hackney Wick and Fish Island Cultural Interest Group (CIG) was founded in 2010 as a local business network to facilitate a permanent, sustainable, creative economy in Hackney Wick and Fish Island and particularly to advance the arts and culture and is now the foundation stone of Creative Wick's established, core program of community infrastructure initiatives. Based on the premise that creativity makes places better, the CIG facilitates personal relationships, networking, engagement, partnership building, resource sharing and collaboration between its members. The CIG meets monthly (currently online but typically up to 50 attendees in person) and has its roots in community engagement and the ambition of facilitating a genuinely diverse, socially conscious, mixed-use local economy with opportunities for everyone who lives and works there.

The CIG has an open membership policy and includes any enterprises, community groups, institutions, private companies and public sector organisations active in the area as well as sole traders, freelancers and

local residents. The CIG now has more than 1800 members including representation from LLDC, LB Hackney, LB Tower Hamlets, GLA, local stakeholders, businesses, cultural and education institutions, residents and the development sector.

In an area of East London that is experiencing rapid regeneration on a massive scale, the CIG is an inclusive and trusted existing local network that has the flexibility to innovate and adapt and encourages collaboration across sectors and social groups, in an attempt to mitigate the negative impacts of gentrification.

Hackney Wick and Fish Island was granted Creative Enterprise Zone status in 2019.

The CIG's 5 pillars of interest are: Art and Culture, Education and Learning, Enterprise and Innovation, Environment and Community, Health and Wellbeing.

<https://creativewick.com/network/>



Cultural Interest Group - March 2020



Transforming the Future of East London exhibition Collaborators: Gainsborough Primary School and Laing O'Rourke (Photo: Delphine Orliange)

## CREATIVE WICK EDUCATION PROGRAMME

**Category:** Youth engagement

**Collaborators:** Wick Primary School, Laing O'Rourke

Creative Wick is a Community Interest Company and the Creative Wick Education Programme has two key objectives. One, to provide paid opportunities for creative economy practitioners in Hackney Wick & Fish Island to transfer skills, knowledge and access to networks for local young people to build levels of economic resilience and social cohesion in the community during a period of mass local development (p16). Second, to give local young people the opportunity to learn and train with creative professionals to give them the skills and experience that may lead to further training, education or employment as well as a greater understanding of the development process.

Creative Wick designed and delivered a five-week workshop programme to Gainsborough Primary School year 6 pupils exploring the role of architects and other creative practitioners in the development process. The objective was to employ creative practitioners with spare capacity to give local young people the opportunity to learn and train with architects, designers, engineers and makers to give them experience of the skills and experience that can lead to further training, education or employment in both the construction and creative industries. Pupils were asked to design and build models of a range of public buildings that were then exhibited for parents and staff at Here East. For more information please visit: <https://www.creativewick.com/blog/transforming-the-future-of-east-london/>



Left: Millbank History Chair, UAL Chelsea graduate creation  
Right: Moat Community Garden, Millbank (Photos Wilfried Rimensberger, Millbank Creative Works)



## MILLBANK CREATIVE WORKS

**Category:** Community empowerment  
**Collaborators:** UAL Chelsea College of Arts, Tate Britain and the Millbank Estate

Its aim of the Millbank Creative Works has been to create a transferable model of a local community hub that uses entrepreneurial approaches to creativity and sustainability projects as tools to overcome societal fragmentation. The vision is one of an innovative neighbourhood culture utilising local citizen talents enabled by close co-operation with educational and cultural stakeholders. Bringing together these elements has become possible by co-locating in a University environment.

So far, a 5 year pilot project has been successfully developed with key neighbourhood institutions, including

UAL Chelsea College of Arts, Tate Britain and the Millbank Estate. In particular, this participatory model has strengthened and built new relationships between Chelsea College of Arts teaching staff (Dr Marsha Bradfield and Shibolet Shechter) and local 'doorstep' communities. Together, they have explored and shared in the lived Millbank experience through continuous collaborations with students on research, design and arts projects addressing local community issues. A data bank of projects documenting contacts, research, impact of creative and cultural dynamics, with artefacts from exhibitions, workshops and videos has been assembled.

## PECKHAM VISION

**Category:** Community Activism

**Collaborators:** Peckham Vision, many local people, independent local businesses and other local groups

The authorities' had plans for 3 large sites around Peckham Rye station in Rye Lane that were based on demolition and building anew. Local people, over more than a decade in three separate campaigns, drew attention to the existing activities and economic life in these areas and their potential in order to change the authorities plans. In each case local knowledge was gathered and presented that enabled the local economy to be sustained and thrive without demolition. Now the area is known for its economically viable reuse of iconic buildings such as the Bussey, Peckham Multi Storey and station Old Waiting Room, all saved through community action, local knowledge and vision.

Peckham Vision is the resident-led active citizens' group that grew from this experience and now advocates for agreed fact-based audits as required practice before any development process begins. Eileen Conn, founder of Peckham Vision, explains that "Sustainable neighbourhoods can be achieved only by involving local stakeholders in detail to establish an agreed published statement of the facts on the ground before any development process starts."



Peckham's future – a town centre community meeting in the Bussey Building, January 2016. Photograph courtesy Corinne Turner, Peckham Vision.

## CANADA WATER MASTERPLAN

**Category:** Co-design

**Collaborators:** Soundings, British Land

Soundings was appointed by British Land in 2014 to lead consultation, co-production, capacity building and cultural events to help shape and inform the Canada Water Masterplan. Soundings was appointed before Roger Madelin was brought on board by British Land, but his arrival catalysed a range of local interactions and involved a wider masterplan review of the existing proposals.

The consultation process was led with a clear focus on developing an alternative neighbourhood to Canary Wharf, just one stop away on the Jubilee Line. Acting as the key conduit between British Land and the local community, Soundings hosted and facilitated a range of exhibitions, topic discussions, youth engagement sessions, co-production workshops, Community Liaison Group meetings and public communications on the Masterplan.

A planning application for the Masterplan was submitted to the London Borough of Southwark in May 2018. Soundings continued to work with British Land and engage and consult with the local community throughout the determination stage on a broad range of issues including investigative and enabling works,

run a number of neighbour drop-in sessions and worked with local schools.

On 30 September 2019, Southwark Council Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission for British Land's masterplan, in line with their officer's recommendation. The resolution to grant planning consent is the first step in the approval process for the project and comes after five years of extensive consultation and input from the local community, during which we welcomed over 5,000 individuals to over 120 public consultation and local outreach events, with feedback influencing the Masterplan at every stage of its development.



3D Canada Water Masterplan

# To create a more Positive Space we will

1. Listen first
2. Open up
3. Make it easier

Positive Space Charter document

## POSITIVE SPACE

**Category:** Community empowerment  
**Collaborators:** Grosvenor Britain & Ireland

Positive Space is a community charter created by Grosvenor Britain & Ireland. It aims to set a new standard for public engagement and give communities meaningful involvement in how their neighbourhoods are managed and evolve.

The charter is based around four key principles: listen first, open up, make it easy, and be accountable. These four principles define how Grosvenor now seeks to engage with tenants, residents, and others who play a part in day-to-day neighbourhood life: from businesses and institutions to community organisations and amenity societies.

Alongside the commitments from Grosvenor, the charter also makes a few requests of communities in return, recognising this is a two-way street.

The commitments were tested with more than 20 community representatives and practitioners, and Grosvenor has also launched a six month capacity-building programme for a cohort of 40 of its staff to enhance their skills in community engagement.



Youth Panel at Cambridge Road Estate Public Exhibition

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

**Category:** Youth engagement  
**Collaborators:** Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, ZCD Architects, Countryside, Soundings

The modern-day Cambridge Road Estate was built by Kingston Council in 1969. Today, it contains 832 homes and a community of around 1,810 people, of whom 26% are under 15. It's also the borough's largest regeneration programme.

Over a period of six months, the council worked with a group of 18 young people to help them understand and influence the plans. Over the course of five sessions, they ran design training, listened to their experiences, and conducted spatial analysis of the estate together, culminating in a direct critique by the young people of the masterplan itself.

The project found that young people's fundamental interest was in the public space - not the buildings. They conceived of all external spaces in their neighbourhood as somewhere to meet friends, get about and play. They had a strong sense of justice and wanted all blocks to have equal access to space on their doorstep.

They also wanted benches to sit on throughout the estate - on streets, in courtyards and in green areas - allowing them to gather in groups and chat; and positively welcomed the presence of adults in their world.

This five session model has now been developed into a national youth engagement toolkit published by Grosvenor Britain & Ireland, Sport England, the TCPA and ZCD Architects.  
[www.voiceopportunitypower.com](http://www.voiceopportunitypower.com)

## INDUSTRI[US]

**Category:** Meanwhile

**Collaborators:** London Mayor, GLA, LB Newham Mayor, Newham Regeneration, Fluid

Industri[us] is an initiative originated in 2012 by Fluid and a number of collaborators focused on helping communities to get back on their feet and grow. It uses vacant sites to bring about positive longer-term changes – social, economic and environmental – through a short-term set of activities and events targeting skilling, training and support for start-ups and young businesses in areas related to sustainable technologies and trading.

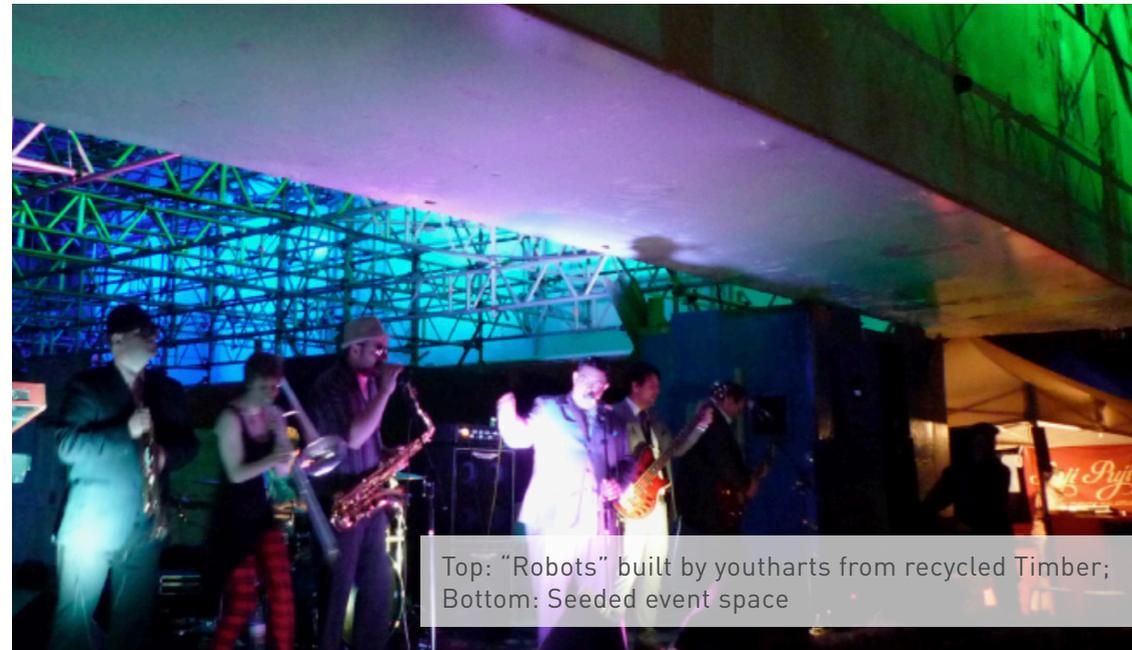
A key focus for this prototype project is a re-evaluation of waste materials as, in fact, part of a supply chain for re-purposed and upcycled products. The emerging market for upcycled goods demonstrates that such products can generate considerable value and that people are buying into the idea of “something created out of nothing”. Industri[us] fosters this creative transformation, by providing enterprise opportunities for existing upcyclers and facilitating others to enter the industry.

Working in close collaboration with individuals, organisations and businesses, the initiative aims to build a lasting skills base, promote the sharing of knowledge and

strengthen local networks – thereby helping to generate a sustainable local economy.

Outcomes for Canning Town:

- Skilling and transition into employment of 15 NEETs including ex-offenders
- Creation of a major recycling/upcycling facility working with Groundworks London
- Recycling over 100 tons of plants, trees and pavings from the 2012 Chelsea Flower Show
- An £18,000 commission to ‘Robots Collective’ to work with local youths to build the Robot known as the ‘bot’ of the east
- Staging of three major seminars on upcycling and sustainability
- Sponsorship and proactive engagement of Philips lighting on new energy efficient spotlights
- In-kind contributions to the project valued at over £300,000



Top: “Robots” built by youtharts from recycled Timber;  
Bottom: Seeded event space

## GOV.TW OPEN SOURCE OPEN GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION

**Category:** Community empowerment

**Collaborators:** Taiwan government,  
citizens

g0v.tw is an online community that pushes information transparency, focusing on developing information platform and tools for the citizens to participate in society. Substituting the “o” with “0” in gov, the new “g0v” not only stands for rethinking the role that the government plays from the bottom up, but also represents the world view of 0 and 1 in the digital natives generation. Based on the spirit of open source, g0v cares about freedom of speech and open data, writing code to provide citizens with the easy-to-use information service.

The transparency of information can help citizens to have a better understanding on how the government works, to understand the issues faster and to avoid media monopoly, so they can monitor the government more efficiently, and become involved in actions and finally deepen the quality of democracy.

g0v.tw has a great variety of contributors, including web developers, high-classed programmers from famous corporation (like Google, Apple, Yahoo, HTC, Canonical, Mediatek, Trend and etc.), elite hackers,

professors, NGO/NPO activists, students, writers, artists, designers and other professionals from every aspect. People gather here to share his or hers expertise, learn together and generate meaningful results. Everyone is always welcomed to join g0v.tw with passion and a devoted attitude.



All: g0v.tw Open Source Open Government Collaboration

## KINGS CROSS

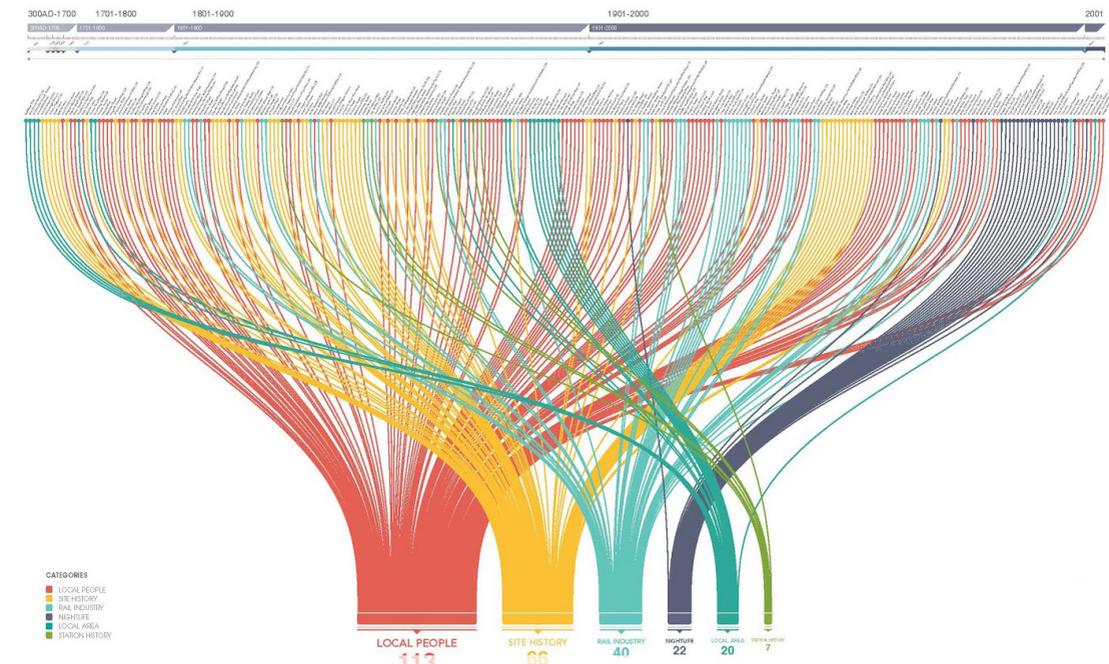
**Category:** Co-design

**Collaborators:** Soundings, Argent plc

Kings Cross has become one of London's few publicly celebrated urban regeneration projects. When Argent appointed Soundings to devise and implement all forms of public engagement and set out to transform the area in 2001, it was with the commitment to retain as much as possible in the way of heritage structures, established communities and the area's special 'gritty' character. The public realm was genuinely open to all, and a piece of London that was once a barrier has become a permeable, walkable and enjoyable neighbourhood where the rich and the poor, workers and students, high end retail and street food intermingle in a satisfying way.

The public consultation was the first and only such exercise ever to have been granted a Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) award for Innovation. The multiple channels of engagement involved young people, local power brokers, artists, poets, educational institutions and multiple local residents and community groups in an intense series of workshops, 'happenings' and feedback sessions that shaped and tested the 'framework for regeneration'. The process of

direct local engagement has been a constant. For instance, five years ago local people were involved in naming their future streets and public spaces, many recalling family histories. Just two years back, Soundings carried out a public assessment of the project (which is still under construction) to seek means of directing s106 spending for improvements to the public realm and other assets, in response to the feelings and experiences of established local residents, businesses, retailers and students. It is a piece of London of and for all.



Top right: Gasholder Park, King's Cross; Bottom right: Timeline of historically relevant entries

## UCL & COMMUNITIES IN BUILT ENVIRONMENT RELATED COURSES

**Category:** Education

**Collaborators:** University College London (UCL)

### **UCL Bartlett School of Planning's Neighbourhood Planning & Community Engagement Programme:**

This has been a regular annual programme for UCL's Bartlett School of Planning (Prof Michael Edwards) provided by tutors drawn from London's communities, giving students real life experiences of the issues faced by local communities. Students are mentored by Just Space and community activists on a variety of socially useful purposes. For the 2019-2020 academic year these included evaluating outputs from the draft London Plan Examination in Public – transcribing and analysing recordings of sessions to inform further Just Space policy positions. And assisting the Grand Union Alliance, Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum, Thames Ward Community Project in Barking Riverside OA and Save Hackney Central Campaign – on various aspects of neighbourhood planning, community organising, and major site development analysis.

### **UCL's Geography Department**

Paused this 2019-2020 academic year, UCL's Geography Department (Prof Jennifer Robinson) had run with the Bartlett School of Planning an innovative Masters course 'Community Participation in City Strategies' where local communities identified the planning issues that students tackled. Course content and work, co-produced with community representatives, developed organically over the term-time, proved to be more challenging and rewarding than more conventional taught courses.

### **Collaborative City Planning Strategies**

Another strand of the Bartlett School of Planning's Community Engagement Programme is delivered through a Masters planning course 'Collaborative City Planning Strategies' (Teaching Fellow Elena Besussi), which attracted 48 students.

A Just Space nominated tutor embedded in the course focused on the 'Future of High Streets' from a community perspective.

### **UCL The Engineering Exchange**

The Engineering Exchange (EngEx) (Prof Sarah Bell) is a network of engineers, built environment specialists and Londoners who are committed to making UCL expertise available to communities, while helping staff and students align their work with local needs.

The EngEx links up community groups with engineers and built environment specialists, who then work together to tackle problems facing London communities. It has supported a range of research projects looking at topics including air quality, demolition of social housing, green infrastructure, neighbourhood planning, transport and waste, among others.

Unfortunately, due to uncertainties around the impact of Covid-19 on University resources, this programme has been paused. But, this innovative match-making service warrants recognition and continuing. Previously, anyone was welcome to contact EngEx with an idea or problem; although, its ability to support a project depended on the availability and skills of researchers, engineers or built environment specialists. To ease the process, EngEx provided support and project development experience to both experts and communities.

### **UCL Bartlett School of Planning Civic Design CPD Course 2019**

The aim of the Civic Design Continuing Professional Development Course (Dr Pablo Sendra) is to teach urban planners and architects how to run co-design processes and better collaborate with community groups. The course is targeted at professionals in architecture and urban planning rather than undergraduate students. Two weeks of online lectures provide knowledge to students on how to run co-design processes and better collaborate with communities. Prior to Covid-19, this was followed up by a three-day face-to-face course where students applied that knowledge and worked in collaboration with community groups. Community members, acting as mentors, can take the course for free, gaining skills and campaigning tools for their organisations.



Top left: UCL Civic Design participants South Kilburn (Photo courtesy Pablo Sendra, UCL) ; Top Right: Monitoring Air Quality in Somers Town, The Francis Crick Institute site. Photo courtesy UCL Engineering Exchange Creative Commons Copyright; Bottom left: Colin George Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum briefing UCL students 2016 Photo courtesy by Robin Brown GUA ; Bottom Right: Professor Sarah Bell, Engineering Exchange Photo courtesy UCL Engineering Exchange

## 6. GROUP MEMBERS



CLARE RICHARDS

ARCHITECT AND FOUNDER,  
FTWORK

Clare Richards, architect and award-winning documentary filmmaker, founded ftwork in 2016 to promote thriving communities and ensure that clear social principles underpin development. A not for profit, ftwork collaborates at local level to support projects and initiate ideas whilst, at national level, working to encourage best practice and debate policy change.

**“ For communities to succeed depends on collaboration and trust, yet that this is not generally applied. We must convince those with the responsibility and power to act to lead by example. To create inclusive and thriving places requires all involved to understand their makeup, learn what people value and require and then to work collaboratively with them to deliver a shared vision.”**



EILEEN CONN

COORDINATOR, PECKHAM  
VISION

Eileen is active as a resident in community groups in planning at neighbourhood, borough and London levels, and is coordinator of Peckham Vision, a citizens' action group. She was awarded the MBE in 2009 for services to the community and included by The Planner in their list of 'Women of Influence 2020' for her pioneering contribution to community engagement in the planning process. Eileen is author of 'community engagement in the social ecosystem dance' – <https://bit.ly/2yloS7b> – a new way to understand the dynamics of community engagement.

**“ Local knowledge is the missing vital ingredient in neighbourhood policy and plan making. Community stakeholders have to be fully in the development process before it starts. ”**



GABRIELLE APPIAH

PROJECT COORDINATOR,  
SOUNDINGS + FLUID

Gabrielle has a background in geography and urban planning and is passionate about ensuring that diverse groups are included and can meaningfully participate in the planning system. This is demonstrated in her professional experience coordinating various built environment professionals toward the common goal of enabling diverse communities to participate in shaping places as part of large scale redevelopments across London.

**“ We operate in a diverse city with diverse communities and the profession and places we create should promote this with real inclusion and a focus on social justice in order to meaningfully reflect and celebrate this. ”**



LARA KINNEIR

DESIGN CITIES LEADER,  
LONDON SCHOOL OF  
ARCHITECTURE

Lara is a designer working across the public, private, academic and the third sector, campaigning and delivering projects that demonstrate how the built environment connects to people's quality of life. All projects seek to find effective models for delivering urban change that is participatory, effective and responsive to urgent needs today and in the future.

**“Communities are the forgotten voice around the place making table. They should be an equal voice, alongside the broad range of professionals, organisations and governance structures, if we truly want to create places that provide for the diversity of those that spend time in them. ”**



### LIZ AWOYEMI

URBAN DESIGNER/PROJECT LEAD, OLD KENT ROAD, LB SOUTHWARK.

My work is centred around people and places. It champions education and young people within the built environment. I joined this group to develop a working model that addresses the social, economic and health inequalities and to empower wider communities to influence decision making for regeneration aspirations in London.

**“ Excellence in our environment can encourage excellence in our lives. ”**



### MATT BELL

CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, GROSVENOR BRITAIN & IRELAND

The heart of Matt’s job is to help lead campaigns to champion community success and tackle the climate emergency. He has held leadership roles with global NGOs, public bodies and a FTSE 100 business. He trained as a youth worker before becoming Communications Director at VSO, Policy & Campaigns Director for CABE, and then Group Head of External Affairs at Berkeley.

He jointly devised the award-winning Street Elite programme which tackles youth unemployment, is a trustee of the youth conflict charity Leap, and chair of Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair.

**“ Some things are not so complicated. At the start of the process, developers just need to shut up and listen. ”**



### ROBIN BROWN

CHARTERED TOWN PLANNER, HAYES COMMUNITY FORUM

Presently supporting a wide range of voluntary activities in and around Hayes, West London. But, recognising the need for, and the benefits of, wider alliances and involvement, has joined in to help ‘unlock’ the abilities and talents of communities in determining their future in London.

**“Well reasoned community originated proposals can have traction and credibility. But, we must nurture the involvement of those who ordinarily don’t participate and strive to come to a common understanding”**



### SIMON DONOVAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MANOR HOUSE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Joining the Trust in 2008 as its sole officer Simon has built the organisation to become a leading Community Development /Social Regeneration Enterprise winning 3 UK national awards in 2017 including a coveted Queens Award for Enterprise and NatWestSE100 Impact Champion. Over the last 30 years Simon has practiced and advised on community development on social rented sector housing estates across east London in some of the most poor and challenging wards.

**“ All we do is informed by five principles: connecting, empowerment, space, influence and organisation. It seems to work well. ”**



### STEVE MCADAM

FOUNDING DIRECTOR,  
SOUNDINGS + FLUID

An architect with nearly 30 years experience, 25 of them in leading projects co-designed or co-defined with communities from Kings Cross to the 2012 Olympic Park legacy, to shared landscapes and buildings; all with social value deeply embedded. Prior to practice Steve taught architecture and urbanism at the Architectural Association and 'London Met', where he also set up the 'Cities Institute' research centre and an MA on multidisciplinary urban design.

**“We must build better places through the active, well informed participation of our communities.”**



### WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN

DIRECTOR, CREATIVE WICK

A solicitor and social entrepreneur who for the past ten years has been developing a range of creative place-shaping and inclusive regeneration projects to help establish Hackney Wick and Fish Island in East London as a permanent, sustainable, creative economy alongside the large-scale redevelopment of the area surrounding the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. He incorporated Creative Wick as a Community Interest Company in 2013 and is a partner at Counterculture LLP.

**“ There’s no substitute for local pride, knowledge and networks so the best starting point is with the neighbourhood’s community anchors – but only approach with care, respect, and transparency ”**

# 7. ENDORSEMENTS AND SUPPORT

**CLAIRE HARDING,**  
RESEARCH DIRECTOR,  
CENTRE FOR LONDON

“We won’t get the quantity or the quality of the development we need without putting the public at the centre of the development process. That does not have to mean a slower and more expensive planning system – it could mean a more proactive and simpler one. The key thing, as this publication argues, is to get communities involved early and as equals ”

We at Centre for London share CCA’s commitment to meaningful public involvement in planning. We look forward to working with the team at CCA to put some of these ideas into practice, so that London can be an exemplar for genuine community engagement in the development process.

**BEN ROGERS**  
FOUNDING DIRECTOR,  
CENTRE FOR LONDON

**ROBERT EVANS**  
JOINT MANAGING PARTNER,  
ARGENT

“20 years ago we embarked on an ambitious programme of community engagement, to inform our emerging plans for King’s Cross. The work we did then was crucial to the genesis of a nationally significant regeneration project and helped support plan-led, local decision-making, in favour of major change. Many people took a great deal of time and trouble to take part in the process; and their responses demonstrated depth and sophistication. The experience significantly improved our knowledge of the site, its surroundings and communities and contributed positively to the evolution of a place that is now widely celebrated.”

**THEO MICHELL PHD**  
PRINCIPAL, BYWATER  
PROPERTIES

**“We feel there is a deep distrust of the development process that undermines the genuine potential for private enterprise to deliver positive change in our city. Undoubtedly that has been exacerbated by a cursory approach to proper engagement with communities. We feel it’s vital for both professional and local communities to find a productive way to collaborate which can only come from genuine and early stage dialogue, sharing learnings and perspectives on all sides, and the clear template for best practice outlined in this paper.”**

**RICHARD MEIRER**  
CO-FOUNDER, STORIES

**“We strive to give people more purpose and pleasure through our developments. To create these better outcomes, people must be front and centre in the process. CCA has the potential to create a step change in how we engage, for the better.”**

## **SUE MORGAN**

ACTING JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
DESIGN COUNCIL

**“Design Council truly believe in the power of design to transform lives and create inclusive places and environments. At the heart of this lies people, communities, users and beneficiaries. To truly design well, equitably and with impact, we need to engage, empower and understand people. We can only do this if we have a truly diverse, transdisciplinary professionals and recognise that the way we approach development and creation needs to change. We need to build and facilitate the conditions for meaningful collaboration, co creation and engagement. Design Council and their Built Environment network are active in creating these conditions, and endorses the work of this group to further the mission.”**



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