

**MAYOR OF LONDON**



Using regeneration to shape  
how we all live together

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2019 Programme Report

**SOCIAL  
INTEGRATION  
DESIGN LAB**

# Contents

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Social Integration Team, supported by  
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## DEPUTY MAYORS' FOREWORD

In London's first ever Social Integration strategy, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, set out his vision for a more socially integrated London. This means giving people more chances to connect with each other in positive and meaningful ways. It means enabling Londoners to play an active part in their communities and the decisions that affect them. It also means reducing the barriers and inequalities between us, so that Londoners can relate to each other as equals.

London's neighbourhoods, high streets and public spaces are vital spaces for bringing people together, joining in locally and accessing important services. This happens in many different ways. Social infrastructure like places of worship and community centres are important for community gathering and organising. High streets and markets which reflect London's diverse population give us experiences across difference and help everyone to feel included. Accessible and affordable playing fields support people to come together through sport.

As such, these places are often at the heart of our shared experience of the city. Yet, if we do not plan, design and manage it well, the built environment can serve to separate and isolate.

Local authorities are key to social integration. Through their services, spaces and funding, they create opportunities for us to share experiences. Through planning and regeneration, they also have a key role in shaping the places that matter most to us. This work is happening in the face of big challenges. Cuts to local authority funding, land value pressures

and rising rents have meant that social hubs around London are under pressure. We need to work creatively to ensure that these challenges don't do permanent damage to communities and integration. Many local authorities are already doing good work in response to these challenges. Our ambition is to support them to do even more.

That's why we set up the Social Integration Design Lab in 2019. This programme brings together London local authorities with experts in service design, regeneration and community engagement. The aim is to see how existing regeneration work can improve social integration so that our city continues to reflect and be a home to all Londoners.

We commissioned a partnership between Snook, NEF Consulting and London Metropolitan University to design and run the Lab. This report brings together what has been learned so far and showcases the work of the 17 boroughs that took part. It shares outcomes of the Lab with principles, project snapshots and recommendations to help local



authorities and other regeneration partners to deliver a more accessible, welcoming and inclusive London.

The Lab is about thinking more deeply and taking meaningful actions to improve how Londoners experience their city. Of course, there are no quick fixes. That's why we must work across council teams and with local people, civil society and the built environment sector.

Regeneration is often thought of as a physical process. For example, improving green spaces, adapting high streets, or providing new homes and social infrastructure. We believe it should equally consider social integration.

We want to build on the 2019 Social Integration Design Lab. We'll do this through regeneration programmes like the Good Growth Fund and Crowdfund London. Our London Family Fund and ESOL Plus programmes will also

continue to support organisations providing activities in local spaces. These can help Londoners to build new relationships and join in civic life.

We hope this report inspires you to design, deliver and maintain our built environment for the benefit of all Londoners.

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard**  
Deputy Mayor for Social Integration & Mobility & Community Engagement

**Jules Pipe**  
Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

London is one of the world's most diverse cities and it is changing all the time. Many neighbourhoods experience rapid transformation in their physical and social fabric which may drive people and communities apart and leave them less able to participate as equals in the life of our city.

The Mayor's vision of a more socially integrated London is of a city where Londoners have more opportunities to connect with each other positively and meaningfully, and as equals, and play an active part in their communities and the decisions that affect them.

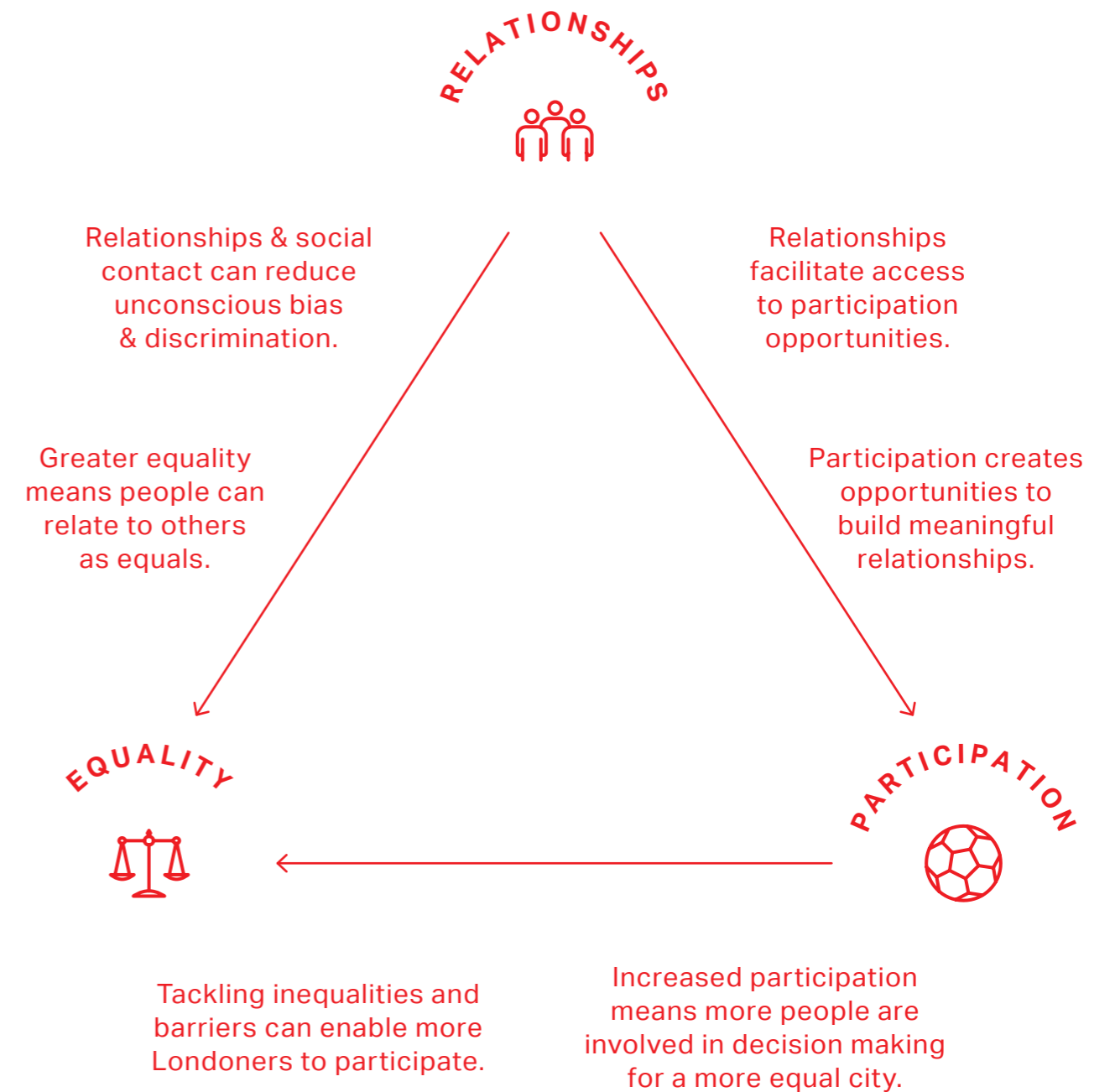
Social integration is so important because it helps us to grow trust and allow communities to flourish. We know that greater social integration produces positive benefits, such as: helping to reduce mental-health issues; preventing violent extremism; stopping vulnerable people from becoming isolated; and increasing social mobility.

Local authorities have a fundamental role in steering regeneration towards socially just outcomes: inclusive

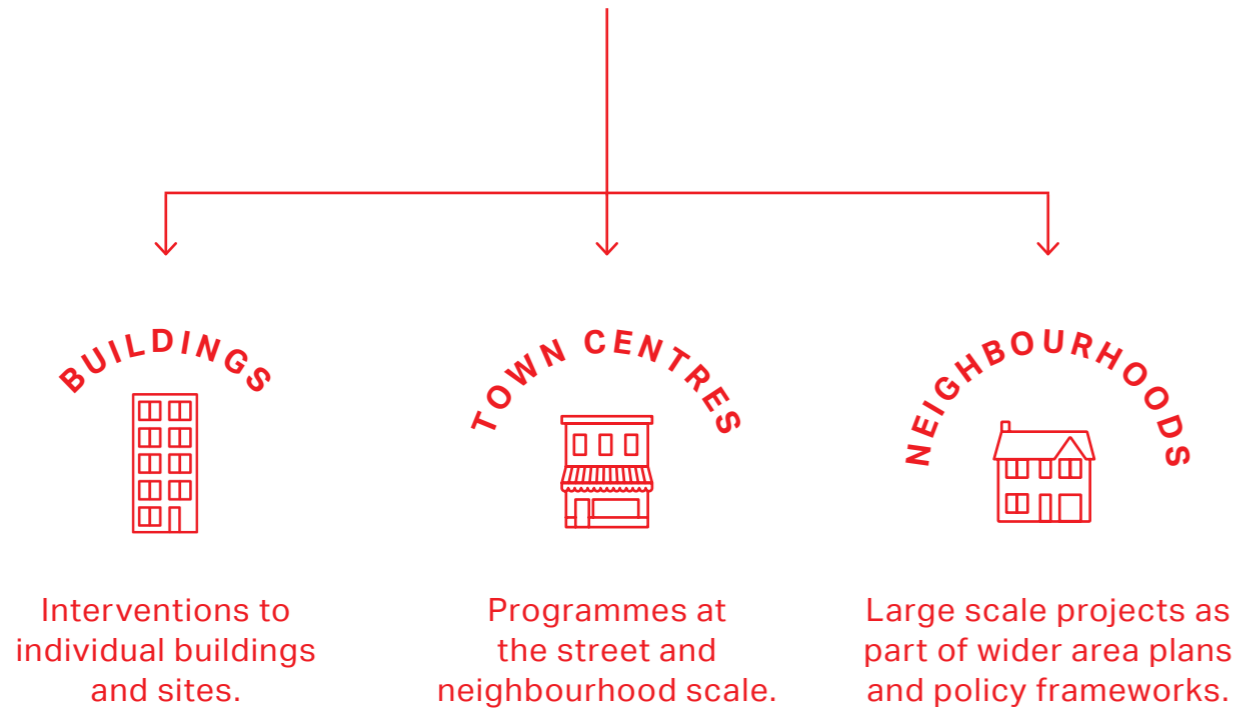
and accessible public spaces, equal recognition of needs and aspirations of diverse groups, participatory decision-making on issues that affect their lives. They'll need to work with local communities, civil societies and businesses to realise the mayor's vision for social integration.

To support this, in line with the Mayor's Strategy for Social Integration, the GLA commissioned Snook, NEF Consulting and London Metropolitan University to deliver City Hall's first Integration Design Lab 2019. Local authority officers and managers from regeneration, planning, community engagement and service delivery teams got together to think more deeply about how to improve social integration in their boroughs.

## SOCIAL INTEGRATION



## PARTICIPATING PROJECTS CATEGORIES



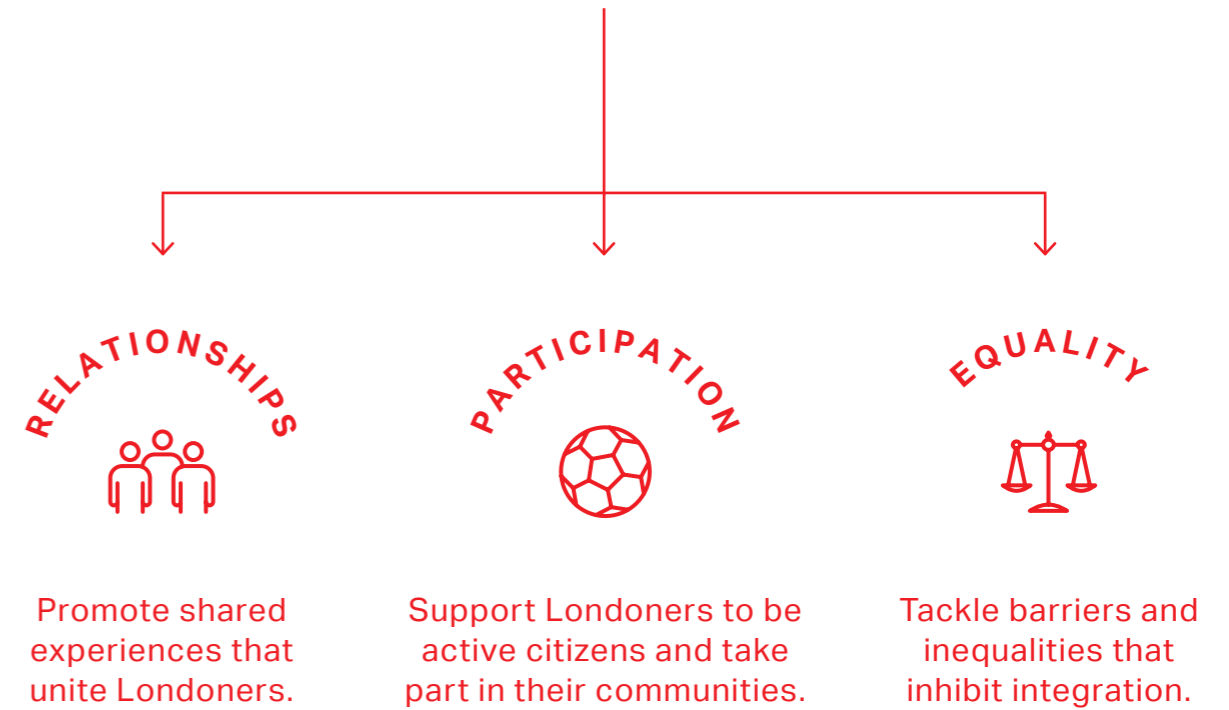
17 boroughs participated in the Lab, each with an existing regeneration project. These covered a range of scales, from refurbishment or re-provision of existing facilities, to improving spaces across town centres and high streets, to neighbourhood-wide masterplanning. Council teams co-created, tested and shared processes and outcomes with each other in order to learn and develop good practice together.

The Lab was structured around three, day-long workshops which covered the core principles of urban development practice, social impact and approaches to place-making, through talks,

practical exercises and group work. In between each workshop, each borough progressed their project, incorporating exercises, approaches and tools from the workshops. The Lab team provided a smaller group support sessions throughout the year too.

Following each workshop, the Lab team adjusted the approach according to feedback from council teams. Further opportunities to learn from the successes of completed regeneration projects were provided through site visits organised by City Hall, and supported by the Mayor's Design Advocates.

## CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION



This report documents and reflects on the work undertaken through the Lab to address specific social integration challenges identified by each borough. It sets out good practice and identifies the 'levers of change' - the people and processes that have the most impact on social integration outcomes.

The aim is to provide a resource for Lab participants to build on their experience from this first year and

keep the momentum going. It will be a valuable resource for London boroughs, partners in regeneration projects, civil society, planners, developers, and community groups.

The projects and approaches presented here are designed to be an inspiration to everyone shaping and sharing a diverse and inclusive city. A London made by and for all of us.

# What we learned

A pilot initiative in its first year, the Lab has functioned as a space for reflection, knowledge exchange and experimentation.

## Bringing people together

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The Lab has succeeded in bringing people from across London together to share their knowledge creativity, resourcefulness and skills with each other, and has allowed for greater interaction to promote better understanding of the challenges – and the opportunities – faced by communities, addressing many different aspects of social integration through a series of research and practice workshops.

Of particular note were the insights shared by council officers who were working on different but comparable regeneration projects. Normally working in isolation these provided an invaluable source of directly relevant knowledge and experience.

More spaces and platforms – such as the Lab – where people can come together to bring regeneration projects to fruition are needed, as these are a fundamental and crucial aspect of placemaking.

## Disrupting the established working culture

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By focusing on the desired aims, ambitions and impact of projects – rather than resources or timelines – the Lab introduced and facilitated a change in how council workers approached regeneration projects. This was a clear departure from 'business as usual' and successfully led to a shift in established council working culture

amongst participants. This approach has succeeded in enabling greater access to wider groups of citizens and communities, making more meaningful engagement possible; understanding communities' challenges rather than simply inviting responses to specific proposals, an approach often perceived as tokenistic.

## Long-term engagement

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Engagement is not a single public event, but a continuous process. It may include engaging with individuals, single stakeholder groups and public audiences at different times and in different ways during a project.

Not everyone in every group has an equal ability to engage and participate, yet it may be that those who are heard the least are the ones most affected by urban change.

## Resources

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A lot more time and resources were dedicated to engagement activities than usual. It's been acknowledged both by council officers and the lab's delivery team that more resources need to be committed to community engagement going forward. While it may appear to be resource intensive,

the benefits far outweigh the cost. These take the form not only of a better, community-led diagnosis of places, their challenges and opportunities, at a project level, but equally build and increase community trust in the long term.

# We recommend

## Focus on impact first

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- Engage with stakeholders to find out desired outcomes from their perspective.
  - Bring these desires together as a vision.
  - Use tools such as Theory of Change and Stakeholder Mapping to gather evidence and measure impact.
  - Prioritise the social integration outcomes of a project ahead of drafting action plans and delivery timelines.
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## Learn, test and learn again

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- Facilitate sessions exploring different approaches to placemaking to provide greater understanding of the different elements that lead to great places; how design affects behaviour, how it supports co-production, and how cultural programming can facilitate social integration.
  - Collaborate across different working groups and teams; harness expertise from different areas.
  - Use prototyping and simulation to provide an effective way to assess propositions, where regulations and health & safety issues prohibit experimentation in real-life situations.
  - Modify and improve these prototypes and simulations as you go.
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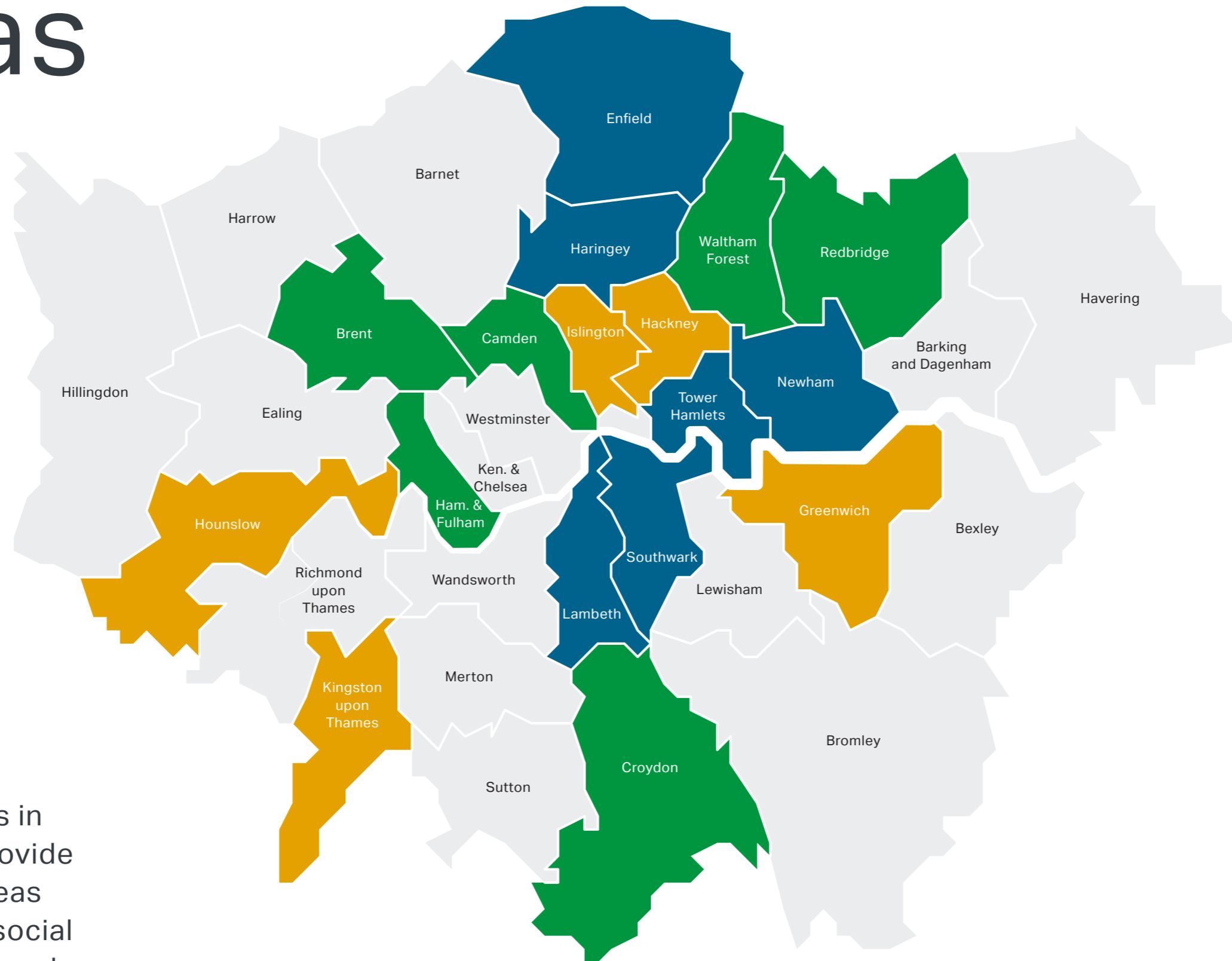
## Empower stakeholder participation

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- Thoroughly map community stakeholders to broaden the diversity of views.
  - Try to understand how individual and group lifestyles are affected by regeneration.
  - Adapt activities to the lifestyles of stakeholder groups, e.g. vary time of day/day of week to suit working and family care patterns; hold events in places that people already use.
  - Work with the local community to define their own future visions.
  - Empowered stakeholders to actively participate in the placemaking process.
  - Build a more accurate picture of a place; its history, culture, and social and economic dynamics by engaging with its people.
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# Integration Ideas



The summaries in this section provide 17 different ideas for improving social integration through regeneration.



## BUILDINGS

Brent  
Camden  
Croydon  
Hammersmith & Fulham  
Redbridge  
Waltham Forest



## TOWN CENTRES

Greenwich  
Hackney  
Hounslow  
Islington  
Kingston



## NEIGHBOURHOODS

Enfield  
Haringey  
Lambeth  
Newham  
Southwark  
Tower Hamlets



The Lab provided a space to test and expand on how regeneration projects can be effective in addressing dimensions important to social integration: relationships across difference, participation in civic life and tackling barriers to equality. Most regeneration projects and programmes are multi-year, phased endeavours. Many ideas developed and strengthened through the Lab

will be delivered in the months and years to come. The ideas below help to illuminate how social integration outcomes can be embedded into regeneration processes. They also help to illustrate that all kinds of regeneration projects, across different scales, budgets and geographies, can contribute to the goal of increased social integration in London.

# 1



## WILLESDEN GREEN, BRENT

### Bring community attention to under-appreciated spaces

Neighbourhood spaces which are not attached or affiliated to a particular group, either formally or by perception, present unique social integration opportunities. The Chapter Road railway underpass in Willesden Green has long been associated with antisocial behaviour and crime. While the space is used regularly, it has been treated and perceived primarily as a thoroughfare. Brent Council have been working to create a safer space through participatory activities and community-led design interventions. Parents of children attending the nearby Gladstone Park Primary School, and other residents, successfully worked with the council to secure Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to support this work.

The ambitions are to create a space where people spend time and children can play. Several ideas have been prototyped, including painting, urban furniture and night lighting changes. A mural design for the space has been co-produced through workshops with

residents and children at Gladstone Park Primary School. Residents have also prioritised benches and places to rest, green space and facilities for kids. Notably, a warmer light colour during the night has been associated with a more safe and positive perception of the space. Despite the small scale of the project and its challenging urban typology, an early evaluation of this kind of co-design approach has indicated improvements on a number of dimensions of social integration, including:

- **Feeling of belonging**
- **Levels of volunteering**
- **Participation in leisure activities**
- **Civic participation**

The improved feeling of safety is a key enabler for some of these outcomes.

It is intended that this approach serves as a prototype for the improvement of underpasses along the Metropolitan Line connecting the south and the north of Brent. Brent is already working on a new project in Park Avenue.

# 2



## KENTISH TOWN, CAMDEN

### Adopt a 'neighbourhoods approach' to public service provision

Working with communities to reconsider the location and distribution of public services can be an effective way to respond to local needs. Camden is working on ways to create shared spaces that help people develop solutions to common challenges. Within the context of a lack of accessible green spaces and activities

for children and young people, the idea of using existing spaces within civic buildings for community use has been explored with residents through a co-design approach in Kentish Town Library.

**See page 30 for more details.**

# 3



## THORNTON HEATH, CROYDON

### Harness high street spaces as visible places for new partnerships

Unused buildings and spaces present one of the few options for community groups in need of affordable physical space for their work and activities. The regeneration of the forecourt of Ambassador House - a large 1960s office building, the upper floors of which have been vacant since 2013 - has been identified as an opportunity to co-create a shared space with and for a range of community groups in Thornton Heath. The area has

been associated with antisocial behaviour and tensions between different communities. Research and engagement work revealed that while many community groups are active in the area, they tend to work in isolation. There is limited awareness of and involvement in them beyond their immediate audiences.

**See page 34 for more details.**

## UPPER EDMONTON, ENFIELD



## Involve young people in estate regeneration – promote a long-term participative mind-set

Joyce Avenue and Snell's Park estate are situated in Upper Edmonton which is in close proximity to the newly developed Tottenham Hotspur stadium and the Meridian Water development, a large regeneration scheme. There are a number of challenges the council is seeking to address in the area, including residual problems with antisocial behaviour, prostitution and crime which is a huge safety concern for the residents on the estate. There are poor pedestrian links creating an impression of a divided estate and hindering social mixing. Observations carried out have indicated limited interaction amongst the young. An estate redevelopment proposal to construct 3000 new homes of mixed

tenures and increase the amount of open space and social infrastructure is being put to a residents ballot. Expanding the scope of engagement and focusing on strategic actions rather than large problem areas, the council aims to particularly engage with the young residents of the estate in order to ensure they can meaningfully engage in the regeneration process. Considering the young people of today as the tenants of the future estate, such an approach can not only enhance community participation in the particular project but equally, by prioritising young people early in the process, promote long-term participative practices.

## WOOLWICH, GREENWICH



## React to redevelopment plans with responsive research

Spaces awaiting (re)development can provide a valuable resource for community focused meanwhile uses. The planned relocation of Woolwich leisure centre has provided Greenwich council with an opportunity to trial an approach to engagement to better understand community health and local services needs as well as town

centre aspirations. This approach has involved an internal, in-council engagement process, that brought together teams and officers from different departments who would not normally collaborate, to enable a broad exchange of knowledge and expertise.

**See page 38 for more details.**

## DALSTON, HACKNEY



## Embed social integration aims into commissioning

Street markets have a major role to play in the social life of communities in London. Ridley Road in Dalston has been a market street for over 100 years. Today it plays an important part in Hackney's history and heritage, with over 150 stalls offering a diverse range of goods that serve the diverse local community well. At the same time, the surrounding area is going through a demographic transition with an increase in the number of residents from higher socio-economic

groups. The council has developed a brief that includes engagement and co-production in its requirements, ensuring that the community dialogue established in the evidence-finding and brief-preparation phases of this project is continued in the work by the consultants, further involving the community in local development and encouraging consultants to work in this way.

**See page 42 for more details.**

## HAMMERSMITH &amp; FULHAM



## Expand the reach of local social infrastructure

Hammersmith and Fulham's community investment programme looks to use council-owned land to develop affordable housing and community assets. It aims to reshape the physical and social infrastructure that can enable neighbourhoods to thrive.

As part of the programme, the re-provision of two primary schools as part of mixed-use developments has provided an opportunity to test an approach to regeneration with an emphasis on community engagement and co-production. During 2019 the council has been developing its co-production approaches, focused on

the delivery of these primary school projects as catalysts for broader impact on social connections and wellbeing. In the delivery programme of the first school, this has involved working closely with the school to develop the brief for the design team. A client design advisor has been working to support this process. Part of their brief includes consideration of social integration opportunities, including a focus on bringing established and newer residents together, and how to think about the use of nearby assets such as Tenant and Residents' Association (TRA) halls.

The redevelopment of this particular form of social infrastructure has helped to identify specific social integration opportunities. Specifically, the team has developed a focus on socialising opportunities for parents as well as children, and is looking beyond those who have a direct link to the school via attendance. The redevelopment

proposals have also triggered new thinking on how schools could better make use of their neighbouring parks. Once the delivery of the scheme is underway, there are wider channels for lessons from this work to be embedded, for example in the other schools owned by the council across the borough or in other areas of densification.

## BROADWATER FARM, HARINGEY



### Test ways to hear from residents through sustainable models of representation

Broadwater Farm is a well-known housing estate in Tottenham with a strong sense of community identity. Current and proposed works present a key opportunity for the community to shape and forge future projects. These range from structural works on existing homes, to reconsidering the location of community and retail units on the estate, to proposals for developing sites following the planned demolition of two blocks. Haringey are working to develop opportunities for more active participation in decision-making about the future of the estate. These structures need to support a wide range of participants, including not only residents but also local businesses and those delivering services at the local school and community centre.

Broadwater Farm faces a number of challenges which impact on effective participation and representation. These include the scale of the estate, the high proportion of 1-bedroom homes, the relatively high proportion

of older residents and residents experiencing multiple forms of deprivation. All of these factors can be linked to experiences of social isolation. Language barriers, as well as a lack of employment opportunities, also limit participation in local decision-making. However, Broadwater Farm does benefit from a strong sense of community identity which Haringey wants to harness to support collaboration on future decision-making about the estate. This task involves a partnership between Haringey Council's Regeneration and Socio-Economic Development teams and Homes for Haringey.

Work will commence this year to develop an Urban Design Framework, which will be informed by consultation with residents and wider stakeholders in and around Broadwater Farm Estate. During 2019, Haringey has been exploring different models of stakeholder engagement. They are working towards resourcing and supporting a representative group to

act as a sounding board and provide expertise on the lived experience of the estate and its spaces. Crucially, this engagement group would also work to explore options and make decisions affecting the future shape and design of Broadwater Farm. Whilst exploring various models of engagement during 2019, the need for a physical presence

on the estate itself has also been identified as an important aspect of any future engagement structure. Going into 2020, work will continue to test various models of collective representation in order to identify which best support consensus building on the future of Broadwater Farm.

## FELTHAM, HOUNSLOW



### Challenge perceptions of long-standing public spaces

Feltham Green is located within an area of rapid demographic and physical change. Given its scale and position in the town centre, it has been identified as a space that could support better social integration between new and existing communities. This has been hindered by poor physical condition, accessibility, connections and maintenance. Barriers of perception, including an association with antisocial

behaviour, have also limited the effectiveness of the Green as a shared public space. Hounslow Council has been engaging the community in the creation of a new vision for Feltham Green, centred on delivering an accessible public space which is well used and actively shared by different groups.

**See page 46 for more details.**

## STROUD GREEN ROAD, ISLINGTON



### Support inclusive design which delivers physical and social accessibility

Accessibility is often thought of in terms of mobility and physical design. Yet attitudes towards, and awareness of, disability issues have an important role to play in making spaces accessible, welcoming and inclusive. As part of the Finsbury Park Town Centre regeneration, Islington Council

is working to create a more inclusive environment for the town centre, with a particular focus on Stroud Green Road. This includes remodelling the public realm to increase accessibility, as well as raising the local business community's awareness of the needs of disabled high street visitors.

## KINGSTON, KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES

11 

## Diversify town centre uses to draw in difference

Building on research and engagement findings which identified a lack of space for collective activity and a limited offer for young people in the town centre, Kingston Council has been developing proposals for how to support spaces to promote more shared experiences. The team have focused on proposals to transform a surface-level car park

into a permanent, flexible community space. The desired outcomes of this project include the diversification of town centre uses, the provision of community infrastructure to enable citizen-led curation of space, and activation of the centre's riverside area.

See page 50 for more details.

## LARKHALL PARK, LAMBETH

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## Build up green infrastructure as a social asset

Larkhall Park is an important green space in Lambeth connected to key regeneration initiatives in the borough, including the Stockwell Masterplan and the Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea (VNEB) Opportunity Area. Many residents living in the Larkhall and Stockwell wards are experiencing high levels of deprivation. Lambeth's Co-operative Local Investment Plan (CLIP) has identified some key issues affecting social integration and social capital, including inequalities in income and employment, language barriers, isolation, fear of crime (serious youth violence) and health inequalities.

Larkhall Park provides valuable green infrastructure in the context of these challenges. The neighbourhood around the park is economically, ethnically and culturally diverse. The area's major

transport links, including the forthcoming Northern Line extension to Nine Elms, also makes the area attractive for mobile, highly-skilled Londoners.

Although Larkhall Park serves a large residential catchment, observational research and engagement work shows that the park is segmented in terms of groups using different areas of it, typically along lines of affluence and social class. At present, existing structures which involve residents in making decisions about the park's maintenance and use are not working well enough to engage the diverse community that surrounds it. The area has a wealth of highly active Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations and stakeholder groups. However, these local bodies, especially

Tenants and Residents Associations, TRAs, whose residents will be affected by the growth and change that is underway, could be better integrated as a collective to deliver shared outcomes and priorities. Lambeth is interested in ideas of participatory budgeting and

other models of collective decision-making as opportunities to build a more representative and active participation. Future funding available to improve and programme Larkhall Park will present an opportunity to test these approaches.

## CUSTOM HOUSE, NEWHAM

13 

## Using meanwhile space to help tackle health inequalities

With the regeneration of Custom House set to deliver 800-900 homes, Custom House Centre needs to work to bring existing and incoming residents together to share in the benefits of improvements to the area. Custom House Centre is a diverse and deprived neighbourhood that borders the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone, and is the next phase of the wider Canning Town and Custom House regeneration programme. This area was traditionally a residential area for dockworkers, other industrial workers and their families. While increased investment in the Royal Docks and surrounding areas is beginning, the area has experienced widespread unemployment and poverty since the closure of the docks.

Along with new homes, the regeneration programme will deliver retail space, a community centre and a new large-scale Health Hub. Through engagement with residents across 2019, health and wellbeing needs have emerged as a key social integration issue. Improving access to healthcare, both through formal services as well as informal support and information, can contribute meaningfully to improving

inequalities between residents.

Given the timeframe of the project, Newham have set up a project base at an old Post Office in the Centre, and are considering how to use vacant retail units to bring existing residents together to test activities and inform future health provision. Ideas to trial included:

**Grow your own:** held by allotment holders to widen allotment group, share or sell produce.

**Around the world cook-ups:** to encourage community to share recipes and food.

**Healthbox:** community sessions from local health practitioners.

These activities aim to support the community to improve their own health and wellbeing, including through social contact, localised support and physical spaces. Through these, Newham will be in a stronger position to identify the formal and informal health needs of the community. These will feed into the Newham Health and Care Space as well as identifying community initiatives that could secure future funding.

## REDBRIDGE

14



## Link core service access with opportunities for shared experiences

Aiming to develop a more locally responsive delivery of services, Redbridge is delivering five new community hubs in different areas of the borough, as well as a new civic centre. These six hubs, in new purpose-built facilities, will enable the council to consolidate disparate council services into single operating locations, and provide central access points to health, social, cultural and other services and activities relevant to the local population.

This approach has provided the team with opportunities to better consider the social integration offer linked to their core service provision. As part of the development of the first hub at Seven Kings, several community activities have been held with voluntary groups and residents, including multiple meetings with different stakeholders to raise awareness and listen to ideas and experiences. There's a strong consensus for the social use of the building, bringing different groups and communities together. Suggestions for how to deliver this included:

- Connecting the delivery of community and voluntary services with statutory services and businesses, whilst maintaining the independence of all.
- Delivering activities such as multicultural food events and fairs, intergenerational cooking or knitting classes.
- Minimising separate zones or entrances where possible, while respecting certain service provision needs.
- Delivering inclusive design, activities and service provision for: visual and hearing impairment, dementia, mental health, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autism.

To test how this new model of service delivery can work best, pop-up outreach services will be delivered in library spaces including the Redbridge Community and Volunteer Services, Age UK, Citizens Advice, London Borough of Redbridge Civic Pride, and London Borough of Redbridge Housing and Benefits. Learning from this work will inform the delivery of the Seven Kings facility, as well as the other Hubs and the civic centre.

## OLD KENT ROAD, SOUTHWARK

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## Champion community-led governance

The Old Kent Road regeneration is a large-scale long-term development scheme that will significantly affect this area of London for many years to come. Despite this, community engagement practices have been failing to reach certain Londoners, notably young people and faith groups. The approach of this project has focused on making use of 231 Old Kent Road, a high street

unit owned by Southwark Council. The unit is being developed as a community hub for raising awareness of the regeneration programme, as well as for celebrating the history and the culture of the local area. Ultimately the aim of the project is to explore new forms of governance.

**See page 54 for more details.**

## TOWER HAMLETS

16



## Support relationships in high density living

It is often assumed that living in close proximity in high-density housing is in itself a driver for residents to develop and deepen social networks within and beyond their community. However, spatial proximity is often not enough to ensure meaningful social interaction. Tower Hamlets is exploring the role of design as a driver for social interaction, in terms of providing the spaces that will allow residents to meet

both within high-density housing and the wider surrounding area. Findings from talking to residents have pointed to the importance of programming within design. It's not enough to have spaces to meet - adequate resources to manage and maintain them are more important for increasing social integration.

**See page 58 for more details.**

## 17



## SOUTH LEYTONSTONE, WALTHAM FOREST

## Consider the social in the operation of council-owned assets

With a large-scale regeneration programme in delivery across the neighbourhood, new residents from different backgrounds are expected to move into the South Leytonstone area in coming years. South Leytonstone is also one of the most economically challenged neighbourhoods in the borough. Many residents experience deprivation of various kinds. In social

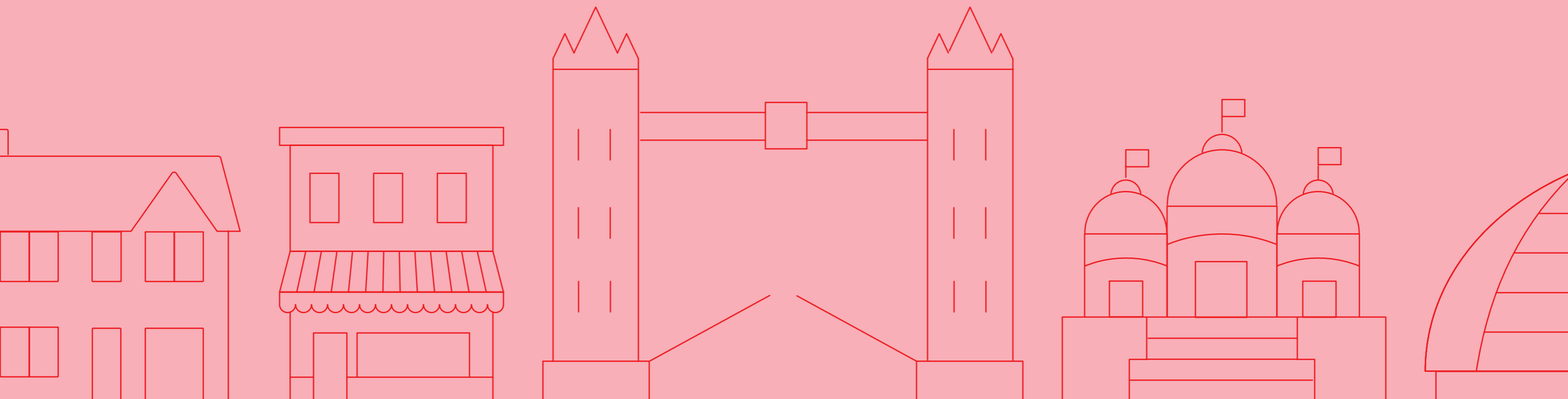
integration terms, there is a risk that younger, more affluent new residents will be disconnected from existing residents - older people in particular.

It's within this context that Waltham Forest Council is considering how best to support social cohesion in an area of key growth. Through the Lab, the council has focused on the Langthorne

Park Pavilion, a council-owned building which is currently underused. This sits in Langthorne Park at the centre of the regeneration area. Currently there are some activities held there throughout the year, including Christmas dinner for elderly residents, and a 'roller disco'. These are largely organised by the Friends of Langthorne Park.

In order to build up a picture of how this asset could better serve the community, the council team carried out early-stage observational and interview research. This focused on how people use the park to engage and interact with one another. Through this work, the council has developed a more specific focus on intergenerational relationships. This

has expanded expectations of how the operational arrangements for assets like the pavillion can support more opportunities for social contact. The project has highlighted, in particular, the key role of individual community members and local staff in connecting people. Language has also been highlighted as a barrier to deeper connections. These enablers and barriers to improved social integration will guide the programming and operation of the pavillion as it comes back into full use, including in assessing operators. The call out for interest from community operators was live at the end of 2019.



# Snapshots



## A LONDON MADE BY AND FOR ALL OF US.

The snapshots that follow illustrate approaches emerging from the ideas councils tested in the Lab. These developed in response to specific social integration challenges identified, including how to encourage social mixing between existing and new residents, how to engage vulnerable people in plans for the future of their neighbourhood and how to deliver services in ways that bring people together across difference.

The snapshots also cover a range of regeneration scales. They cover the revitalisation of disused public spaces, public service delivery at a neighbourhood scale, street-market improvements, the change of use

of car park spaces, the creation of a regeneration and engagement hub for the local community, and the production of design guidance for high-rise housing schemes.

For each snapshot, the area's context is introduced, followed by a short account of each council's approach, including the research and engagement process, key findings and learnings. While the timeline of regeneration projects extends far beyond the period of this Lab, the snapshots capture a moment in time of each of these projects, highlighting good practices that will continue to inform their future ambitions.

# CAMDEN



## INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

### Relationships

How can the co-design and sustained community-led operation of neighbourhood service hubs foster meaningful relations and provide spaces of inclusion?

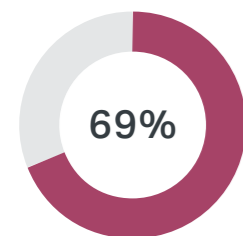
## INTEGRATION AMBITION

To create neighbourhood spaces for the delivery of public services, where local people come together to connect and find solutions to the challenges their community faces.

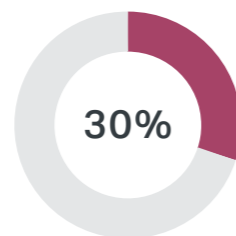
## CONTEXT

The way public services are delivered has a significant impact on a large number of households. Kentish Town is a good example of this. Over 30% of residents live in council housing, 69% of families are on working tax credit and the number of people on out of work benefits is high. The introduction of Universal Credit will have a significant impact on households, particularly for those without online access. The high number of adults in the social care system and the quantity of carers in the borough contributes to people feeling isolated. The community has also been affected by violent youth crime.

An existing draft planning framework focuses on inclusive mixed-use places. It aims to physically knit the area together and increase accessibility for all, including residents of neighbouring Gospel Oak, an area of significant deprivation. It aims to provide opportunities for the whole culturally diverse community to come together to take action collectively.



Families on working tax credit



Residents in council housing.

## PROJECT

A major focus of the 'neighbourhoods approach' currently being developed is on how spaces can support cohesion and collaboration between people from different backgrounds. The vision is a distributed service delivery model through neighbourhood and community spaces. Kentish Town library was chosen as a space to test ways of increasing opportunities for access to technology and learning as well as providing platforms for people to connect.

## PROCESS

### In the research stage, the team focused on understanding:

- How people currently use the library space.
- How they could use the space differently to build more connections in the community.

The project team developed a sense of the extent to which people could act as co-designers of their own solutions, and how a neighbourhood hub model could support them.

### Stakeholder mapping of library users helped identify:

- Key local voluntary organisations.
- Local businesses.
- Groups of people using the library.
- Groups of people not using the library.



Ideas day at the library on the 14.08.19

Credit:  
Sam Eastop



# CAMDEN



Kentish Town Library  
Credit: The Secret Artist NW5



Using this as a starting point, a series of stakeholder engagement initiatives were undertaken. These were extended to a range of voluntary sector organisations, including Age UK Camden, that have done a lot of research on loneliness and isolation. There were focused conversations and group activities like knitting, which were used as a way to speak with people more informally. Additionally, the team engaged in observation work to better understand how people use the library.

An open day was held where people could come and submit ideas, in collaboration with a designer. Engagement events were published through charity and voluntary sector organisations, social media and local businesses, in an attempt to attract more diverse groups of people. Further engagement plans include a drop-in afternoon in the library, and further work with Age UK, specifically to reach vulnerable people and other less accessible groups. A plan for a market stall, cancelled due to bad weather, remains a possibility in the future.

1. **Thinking outside the traditional formal consultation processes** and engaging with people more informally worked well in reaching diverse groups.
2. **Going to spaces already used by the community** such as schools and community centres was also particularly successful in reaching more people.
3. **Learning what the programme of uses and activities of a community hub could be** with the people that will use it is a very effective way of understanding needs and aspirations.
4. **Reaching out and supporting vulnerable groups and people in the community** can be as simple as providing the opportunity for people to come to a safe space and have a chat.

# CROYDON



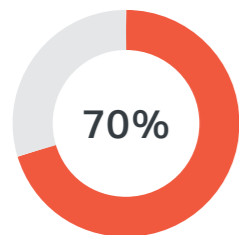
## INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

### Participation

How can diverse groups and community organisations be supported to participate in the shaping of the area's public realm?

## INTEGRATION AMBITION

To ensure Thornton Heath's diversity is fully represented in the council's engagement process so that the community have more meaningful agency over the regeneration of the town centre.



BAME residents

## CONTEXT

Thornton Heath has an ethnically diverse population, with a large Caribbean community and the second highest proportion of residents born outside of the UK in Croydon. It is the third most deprived district in Croydon, including some of the most deprived neighbourhoods nationally, and suffers high crime rates, high childhood obesity rates, and a significant problem with overcrowded housing. Significant skills deprivation is reflected in the qualifications and jobs held by local people, while GCSE achievement rates are below the England average and amongst the lowest in the borough. Specific barriers for certain groups include poor digital connectivity and difficulty accessing support to learn English. These inequalities contribute to many social integration challenges, including a lack of community cohesion.

While there are many active and engaged community organisations, these are not necessarily reflective of the diversity of the local population. Previously, a Thornton Heath community regeneration steering group has been brought together to help shape a programme of public realm works. However, this group did not fully reflect the diversity in the area, lacking representation of young people, businesses and members of BAME communities. Discussions with local stakeholders pointed out equality issues may present barriers to participation, e.g. often approaches to engagement have not been inclusive enough. There is an opportunity now to rethink the role of the steering group as well as the council's broader approach to community engagement in this area.

## PROJECT

There are two interlinked projects in the area: the High Street Development Plan, and the creation of a new community events space at the Ambassador House Forecourt (AHF). As well as the vacant upper floors a number of the retail units on the ground floor have recently closed, with only three remaining open. The forecourt space - the only part of the site in the council's ownership - is currently undergoing development so that it can be used as a meanwhile space for community events. The design and creation of the space, and the programming of the events, aims to be co-produced with the community.

Alongside this, a design-led development plan for Thornton Heath High Street is being prepared. The plan focuses on major sites along the high street which are key to the development of the local area. An integral part of this plan is community involvement that reflects the diversity of the area. It will explore how the council can continue to invest in Thornton Heath in collaboration with the local community, landowners and local businesses.

## PROCESS

In order to better understand the social integration context and barriers to engagement in relation to the town centre developments, an initial survey was carried out. This survey was undertaken to better understand people's experience of the high street and their awareness and perceptions of local community groups.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Reporting of significant antisocial behaviour on AHF.
- Tensions between the established Thornton Heath community and a more recent community of people moving into the area for residence but working outside the borough.
- Desire for improved cafe, retail and cultural offer in Thornton Heath.
- Limited awareness of, and involvement in, different community groups and each other's activities.

# CROYDON



A mobile listening station used to engage with residents at different locations.  
Credit: Zohra Chiheb

Ambassador House Forecourt hosted a number of activities and interventions that sought to create a series of small prototypes. These aimed to reactivate the space as well as to create opportunities for the council and various stakeholder groups to come together, engage and learn from each other:

- A new bus stop garden was built.
- A local artist was commissioned to paint the walls.
- Free physical activity festivals on the forecourt were held over the summer period.
- Free taster classes were organised over a period of six weeks.
- An event focusing on re-greening AHF was organised in collaboration with consultants and the London National Park City.

More work in collaboration with the community is planned over the next 12 months, with the aim of creating an urban oasis in the heart of Thornton Heath. At the same time, the team is exploring how to sustain this community dialogue in the long-term through the creation of a designated structure.



1. **Engagement is a process, not a one-off event:** taking the time to engage with and listen to different stakeholders on a group by group basis, on multiple occasions, and over a period of time rather than through a one-off collective event is important in order to better understand their views.
2. **Dissemination and intra-organisation cooperation:** cross-team collaboration within the council - different teams talking to each other and exchanging insight and experience - has been hugely beneficial to understand the community's multidimensional challenge and map key stakeholders, resources and past relevant work.
3. **Shaping public spaces through ongoing dialogue:** consider the conditions that will enable conversations, dialogues and communication to take place, i.e. platforms and tools for communication, community forums, stakeholder panels, direct engagement with communities.

# GREENWICH



## INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

### Equality

How can we enable community groups, and vulnerable groups in particular, to have equal access in a participatory place-making process?

## INTEGRATION AMBITION

To develop a comprehensive engagement approach to ensure the community is participating meaningfully in regeneration work. To critically reflect on in-council approaches to consultation.

## CONTEXT

There is significant division in Woolwich between the more affluent Royal Arsenal and the town centre, which has some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in London. This takes the form of both physical separation and a lack of social mixing. Low income and poor health are prevalent for a large proportion of the population.

Significant investment in the town centre hasn't achieved the positive impact on residents that was hoped for. Plans to repurpose the leisure centre provide an opportunity to create an important hub connecting local communities. This would support the health, social and environmental wellbeing of the community through the participation and access to opportunities for all residents.

## PROJECT

The Woolwich Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is being updated. This will result in a number of proposals for the area, including the development of a new leisure centre to replace the ageing Waterfront Leisure Centre. While the latter awaits further development, there is an opportunity to develop a meanwhile-use programme through community engagement.

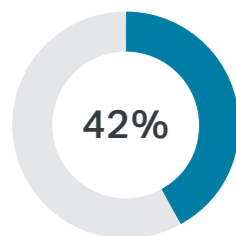
## PROCESS

A series of activities have been undertaken in order to understand and embed the views of local residents in the process of developing the leisure centre:

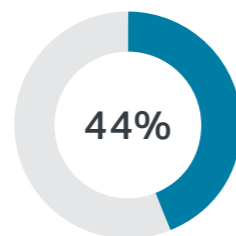
- Internal engagement and collaboration with people from other directorates in the council to break working in silos. Staff had opportunities to share knowledge,

experience and views on projects with similar objectives.

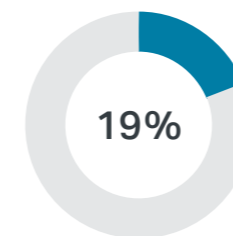
- Engagement activities were tested with the Pause project, which works with women who have had children removed from their care. Following advice from the project lead the activities were broken up into smaller parts, due to the levels of focus and concentration of the participants and their potential perception of anxiousness and wariness about new individuals coming to a small close-knit session. The activities available to the women included craft work, sharing food and discussions as a means of engagement, including mapping positive and negative perceptions of how they felt about Woolwich, what they would like to do in the new proposed leisure centre, and how to meet other people.



Population on income between 0-20k



Young people overweight



Population self-reporting poor general health

# GREENWICH

- An additional opportunity to test engagement approaches came via the Ferryview GP Practice, with a particular focus on mobility and accessibility issues. Regeneration and Planning Policy officers were invited by the Ferryview Service Users Group to discuss the project and consider their ideas and suggestions to better promote social

integration in Woolwich High Street and the leisure centre. The session firstly looked at the mapping of the area and where individuals felt positive and negative experiences and perceptions as well as how groups and communities have a scope of influence on decision making on the regeneration and projects in Woolwich.



Outputs from a craft session to build trust and relationships with residents as well as produce a tangible outcome for the residents to take away.

Photo Credit: Tara Lucas

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“Voices that are heard the least can give you the most rich and insightful data.”

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1. **Bringing together different teams across the council is very useful in identifying communication channels that work with different groups.** Opportunities for engagement through work currently being undertaken by other services.
2. **It's important to be mindful of the different needs of specific groups,** e.g. older and vulnerable residents don't generally attend open public events, so there's a need for individual, bespoke sessions.
3. **Effective engagement happens only in the context of trust and understanding of the lived experience of certain groups.** Building trust happens over time and through ongoing engagement. In particular, art and craftwork are great non-directional 'ways in' to stimulate discussions.
4. **It's important that the process is iterative,** including appropriate feedback and follow-up that allows participants to see how their input has shaped a project.
5. **There needs to be clarity around the purpose of engagement initiatives,** the role played by participants and the desired outcomes of the process.

# HACKNEY



## INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

### Equality

How can we develop a plan for the market that responds both to the concerns of local traders as well as to changing lifestyles and the area's socio-economic demographics?

## INTEGRATION AMBITION

To develop a brief that responds to concerns raised through the Dalston Conversation consultation process, notably affordability, antisocial behaviour, cultural change, and accessibility.

Info Source:  
If Ridley Road Market closes down, there will be no going back for east London, Precious Adesina, The Independent 24 Jan 19

## CONTEXT

Ridley Road in Dalston has been a market street for over 100 years. Today it plays an important part in Hackney's history and heritage, with over 150 stalls offering a diverse range of goods that serve the diverse local community well. At the same time, the surrounding area is going through a demographic transition with an increase in the number of residents from higher socio-economic groups.

Issues that have been identified by the council include underinvestment in surrounding properties, antisocial behaviour linked to illegal drug activity, and lack of accessibility for disabled people. Opportunities for diversifying the offer of the market have been identified.



House price increase in Hackney over the last 20 years.



This is the highest rise across the UK.

## PROJECT

The project focuses on delivering environmental improvements to Ridley Road Market and Ashwin Street while retaining the character and identity of both areas and benefitting traders and visitors alike. Additionally, part of the project focuses on the implementation of new customer payment systems to respond to changing trends in customer spending habits. Approaches being considered include reconfiguring the spatial layout of the market, introducing wi-fi infrastructure as well as different kinds of stalls and new uses.

## PROCESS

The council consulted and engaged with the community through the Common Place platform under the banner of the Dalston Conversation. The aim of this was to gain a better understanding of what residents feel about Dalston in a focused and targeted way. The platform enabled people with little IT capability to engage. Council staff also met with residents and businesses at a number of themed events to ensure the capture of rich data relating to potential improvements.

### Methods used included:

- Face-to-face engagement.
- Common place: web-based platform.

- Deliberative event (an approach to decision-making that allows participants to consider relevant information from multiple points of view).
- Focused sessions with sectors of the community.
- Market stall at Ridley Road.
- Panel meetings (selected panel of Dalston representatives).

**Open-ended questions were used in order to understand all of the dynamics that make up Dalston and ensure that the Ridley Road and the impending Dalston Plan (SPD) specifically addresses community concerns. These included:**

- What do you like about Dalston?
- What don't you like about Dalston?
- What do you like/love about Dalston?
- How could it be improved?
- What is your favourite place in Dalston and why?
- How have the changes in Dalston over the last 5-10 years affected you?

**The Dalston conversation and panel meetings revealed the following:**

- Respondents wanted more green space.
- Cultural and community assets (such

# HACKNEY

as Ridley Road, Arcola Theatre, the Curve Garden and Dalston Library) are highly regarded and people want to see them protected and enhanced.

- People wanted to see improvements to walking and cycling routes in the area.
- Crime and antisocial behaviour was a concern in specific places. Gillett Square was mentioned on several occasions.
- The affordability of new homes and shops was raised as an issue concerning local people.
- Respondents liked the diverse retail mix in the area.
- The evening economy and its impact on the area was a concern for some respondents.

The Conversation consultation took place over a seven month period. It included group workshops, 1-2-1 questionnaires and targeted cohorts to ensure all sections of the community were covered. This process has now been adopted by the council as the new approach to consulting and is considered good practice. **Further info can be found at: [dalstonconversation.commonplace.is](http://dalstonconversation.commonplace.is)**

Notably, the experience of engagement is planned to be taken forward in the council's future work with consultants. Engagement activity and co-production is included in the tender invitation documents within the consultants' set of requirements.

Consultants are hosting a roundtable workshop with key stakeholders and the wider community which focuses on how they use Ridley Road Market and Ashwin Street and what is important to them.

**There are four engagement workshop elements being undertaken by the design team as proposed below:**

- Co-design workshop with market traders on proposals for changed layouts to the market.
- Co-design workshop with market traders to develop and inform redesign of market stalls.
- Co-design workshop with key stakeholders, local businesses of Ashwin Street.
- Workshop with market traders and key stakeholders on the development on St Marks Rise road.

The council is separately concluding its own consultation exercise on changes to fees among the market traders.



Ridley Road Market  
Credit: Hackney Borough



1.

**Consultation can be greatly aided by online map-based tools:** the online platform for the Dalston Conversation is a powerful and easy to use tool to capture views, but also to communicate them back to the community, enhancing communication and understanding between residents and the council.

2.

**Open discussions can help engagement and trust, and provide more meaningful data:** rather than asking confirmatory I agree/I disagree kinds of question following the presentation of specific proposals, opening up the discussion with more general themes enables better conversations and makes people feel they are part of the development process.

3.

**Include stakeholders of demographic change:** within the context of change that impacts differently on new and existing residents, e.g. with regards to affordability, a tool such as the panel of representatives is key to ensure community consensus.

4.

**Include engagement and co-production within consultants' briefs for regeneration projects.** This can not only continue and enhance the community conversations and dialogue previously initiated, but also encourage consultants themselves to work in a more participatory way.

# HOUNSLOW



## INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

### Relationships

How can we use a shared public space to build relationships across different communities, notably between new and existing communities?

## INTEGRATION AMBITION

To move from the standard consultation model to a more meaningful engagement, reaching a wider cross-section of people than usual. To work together with this wider set of stakeholders to activate Feltham Green as a central focus for community activities and events.

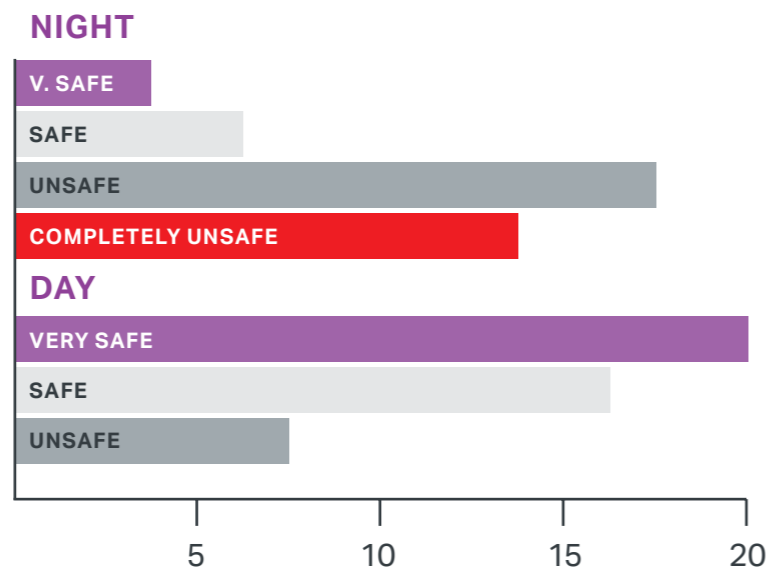
Infographic Credit:  
Feltham Green & Pond:  
now and next report

## CONTEXT

Feltham town centre sits within Feltham North, Feltham West and Hanworth Park wards which had a combined population of 40,000 in 2015. These are more deprived than other parts of the borough in terms of income and deprivation, with low academic attainment, higher crime rates, a higher amount of local authority housing and areas of environmental decline. Hounslow and Feltham have a young population. More than 50% of the residents are under 35, and 27% of the population are under 19.

Existing communities feel a sense of ownership about their area. Poorly handled regeneration projects in the past have galvanised some residents around an anti-development viewpoint. There has recently been some far-right activity in the area.

## HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL AT FELTHAM GREEN & POND?



## PROJECT

The project focuses on Feltham Green and Pond, the focal point of the town centre. It's an open public space, with a terrace of 1920s villas to the rear and fronted by the high street and the local war memorial. It sits at the heart of Feltham Town Centre and Feltham Housing Zone with more than 3,000 new homes to be delivered over 10 years.

The space can be off-putting for families and locals due to antisocial behaviour. Large areas of grass are poorly maintained, and there are no activities or facilities. These issues have led to the Green being perceived negatively by the local community.

## PROCESS

A series of 10 observation sessions were conducted, at different times of day, to understand how people use the space. These sought to understand:

- Do people come to the Green as a destination, or just pass through it?
- Do they walk around it rather than through it?
- What times of day/days of the week see most footfall?
- Which groups are missing from the space?

At a second stage, on-site park chats were held. The team had discussions with around 10-25 people each time, totalling 75-100 chats over a four day period. The project was presented at the Bedfont, Hanworth and Feltham Area Forum. One-to-one conversations with 15 key stakeholders were held, and a total of 38 questionnaires were distributed and completed. A database of 57 people who said they would like to contribute ideas and time to the project has been created. The research activities focused on perceptions of the space, feelings of safety, physical design elements and obstacles that prevent use, as well as future needs and aspirations. Notably, 37% of those interviewed feel unsafe by night but 9% reported feeling unsafe during the day as well.

Co-design activities followed, with meetings to discuss and capture views on design approaches including the general feel of the area, the treatment of edges, lighting, steps and seating, as well as ways to activate the space through programming uses and activities.



# HOUNSLOW



Experiments using crates to test out adding benches in different areas of Feltham Green and Pond

Credit: Caf Fean, Studio Weave / 00



On-site experiments were held to make the idea of physical design changes more visible and engage people further. Colourful milk crates were used to simulate potential design interventions, including the introduction of steps from different edges of the Green down to the park, and chair and seating arrangements.

Moving forward, the council plans to support the establishment of a Friends Group, and use the evidence collected to support the project's funding. The first phase of this scheme will soon be realised through CIL funding.

1. **Empower a team of officers to self-organise and work together.** The innovative approach to engagement, outreach and prototyping has been made possible by officers from different teams self-organising and using initiative.
2. **Avoid information overload, be strategic:** a lot of guidance, policy and general information can be made available to officers and residents, but too much can be counter-productive. Sharing clear and targeted information works best.
3. **Use social media:** use Facebook, Twitter and other platforms that may be critical of the council's approach to reach out to people who may not engage with more official channels.
4. **Highlight the importance of consensus:** make it clear that not everyone can 'win all the time' and that reaching collective consensus is much more important. Increase the voices of those less heard.

# KINGSTON



## INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

### Relationships

How can we diversify the town centre so that young people and students can develop a more meaningful relationship with Kingston?

## INTEGRATION AMBITION

To develop an approach towards repurposing town centre spaces to create activities for different groups, particularly young people.

## POPULATION PARTICIPATION

### TOLWORTH AREA PLAN



368

### RIVERSIDE SPD



102

### LONDON PLAN



56

Participation numbers  
relative to local population  
of 180,000

## CONTEXT

Kingston is set to see significant population growth with a large increase in both the permanent and transient population of the town centre. A key challenge will be to ensure that this growth happens in a way that builds communities and supports integration. There have been low levels of community participation in the planning process historically, but there's an active network of voluntary organisations and community groups which make a positive contribution to the borough. The aim is to harness and translate this engagement into a collective vision, with greater numbers getting involved in the planning process.

As part of Kingston's Streets and Spaces strategy, a social value audit of the town centre indicated a particular lack of offer for young people in Kingston town centre. Despite the high number of students, young people tend to go out of the borough for evening events and activities. Nearly half as many

adults and young adults take part in local activities compared to seniors. At the same time, a demand for more of a cultural offer as well as for spaces and activities for leisure and socialising, beyond consumption and retail which currently dominate the town centre, has been reported by most.

## PROJECT

Kingston Council (RBK) is at the initial stages of commissioning consultancy services to produce a Kingston Town Centre (KTC) Vision & Masterplan to guide regeneration over the next 15 years. The main objectives of this work are to:

- Provide an up-to-date evidence base to support the development of key RBK owned sites.
- Drive the diversification of the town centre economy to support employment sectors other than retail.
- Facilitate a greater mix of uses and users within the town centre, e.g. residential, business, visitors, students.
- Support comprehensive placemaking and coordinated investment into the town centre.

**The Thameside car park was used as a testbed to explore solutions that can inform the masterplan process.**

### In particular:

- Increased participation in community activities and social groups, especially for young people aged 16-25.

### Provide a flexible and adaptable space which:

- Diversifies town centre uses away from retail or 'consumption' driven activity to encourage socialisation between different groups.
- Reduces severance between the north and the south of the rail line.
- Activates this portion of the riverfront, providing better links between North Kingston communities and the town centre.

## PROCESS

The team conducted research, including a significant time spent doing on-site observations. Initial findings were:

- There's a lack of space for groups to get together and 'do things'.
- There's little on offer to discourage young people from leaving the borough for other places.
- Participation rates are relatively low, particularly for young people.

Source: As reported by council

# KINGSTON



Thameside car park used as a testbed to inform the masterplan. Credit: The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames



## A series of events/activities have been programmed for the Thameside car park:

- Programming by youth groups is aimed to increase participation rates among young people (KU Students Union; Creative Youth).
- Programming will incorporate leisure/wellbeing activities.
- A new approach to governance arrangements will be tested. This should be a community designed, delivered and governed space. Those participating in the programme of activities will be asked to input on governance arrangements which would enable community use and therefore greater participation.
- Observation and participant interviews will be used to find out how different groups are using the space, how a permanent offer change could meet their needs and aspirations and what the preferred method of governance would be.

1. **Observations require time and commitment but they are incredibly valuable and can shift established perceptions of a place.**
2. **Contracts and health & safety regulations all need to be considered well in advance when organising events and changing the use of a space.** Don't overlook the impact of external agents, e.g. contractual arrangements may specify how space can be used and may need to be renegotiated.

# SOUTHWARK



## INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

### Equality

How can we ensure our regeneration approaches meet the needs of the Old Kent Road community?

## INTEGRATION AMBITION

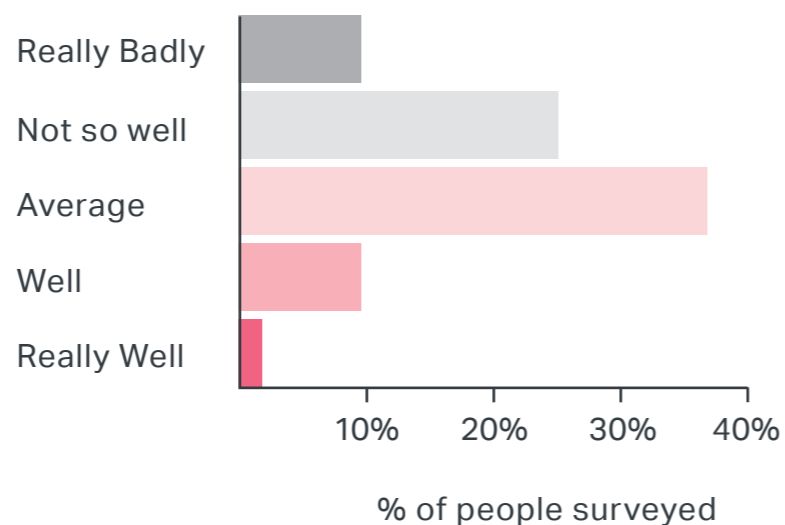
To support the delivery of a neighbourhood where there are places for people to come together and form connections, with facilities and services that cater to the needs of local communities.

Source: Residents surveyed as part of A Tale of Two Southwarks, independent research Report, October 2016 <http://southwarkgiving.org/research-report-sections>

## CONTEXT

In 2017 Southwark Council conducted research in the Old Kent Road (OKR) area to look at how planning policy can be used to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities in the borough. Participants reported that they felt the population was in a state of flux. There was a fear that new people moving into the area would lead to gentrification and erode a sense of community. Additionally, people felt that there was a lack of places to go and things to do, contributing to social isolation.

## IN TERMS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOUTHWARK THINGS ARE GOING:



## PROJECT

The OKR is a major Opportunity Area in Southwark. The council is currently developing a Social Regeneration Charter. This will outline an approach to ensure that change in the area creates new life opportunities, promotes wellbeing and reduces inequalities. A key aspect will involve working with communities to create cohesive and inclusive neighbourhoods. A place plan will be developed for the charter which will detail how these objectives will be delivered.

The Lab project offers an opportunity to test ways of working with the community to develop a governance approach. This should work for local people and be representative of the diversity of the area, providing an ongoing, structured way of getting community input and ownership of key decisions. These would include allocation of funding, prioritisation of projects and urban design, and would provide the council with rich, local intelligence, enabling the design and delivery of spaces that cater to the needs of local communities and bringing people together.

## PROCESS

Research was undertaken with local residents. This included conducting phone interviews, school workshops, and hosting activities specifically organised to bring young people

together. Regeneration was perceived by many as a threat, with concern over future employment opportunities, affordability, and whether developers are including local needs in their plans.

231 Old Kent Road, an unused space, was used as a consultation hub to pilot community engagement activities. Events included an exhibition celebrating the history of the area, a week-long residency by a local entrepreneur, with an open exhibition and workshops aimed at young people. There was also a faith group conference to discuss the Social Regeneration Charter for the next two years in the space. Initial plans include Southwark Young Advisors group operating and curating programmes for the next two years, and free use of the space for faith groups. Discounted rates are also being considered for local organisations hiring space. Ultimately the aim of the project is to explore new forms of governance, including:

- How can the management and programming of the space be devolved to community groups?
- How can community groups help to ensure all voices are heard in the discussion of the area's regeneration?
- How can the project ensure the voices of some of the area's most vulnerable and unrepresented residents and businesses are embedded in the process?

# SOUTHWARK

231 Old Kent Road: community space where local residents, businesses and community groups are invited to share ideas and get involved in future plans for the area.

Credit: New London Architecture (NLA)



1. **Celebrate community life rather than only looking for needs and aspirations:** discover what's already there and value it.
2. **There will always be negative reactions, that's part of the nature of change.** Try to see this as an opportunity to understand the drivers behind them and how they can be addressed.
3. **Understanding group and community lifestyles and their needs is the first step in order to find ways to reach them and engage with them.**
4. **Adapt consultation to the community and to different stakeholder groups:** e.g. move from online surveys to focused community events in community spaces.
5. **Clear lines of accountability and project management are key when developing a project that brings different council teams together.**

# TOWER HAMLETS



## INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

### Relationships

How can the spatial design and programming of high-density schemes foster more meaningful relationships amongst residents, both at the building and neighbourhood scale?

## INTEGRATION AMBITION

To develop guidance for the design, management, and programming of shared spaces in high density schemes, so that these can facilitate more meaningful relationships amongst residents and neighbours.

2. [https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Planning-and-building-control/Strategic-Planning/Local-Plan/Evidence\\_base\\_2016\\_Local\\_Plan/LBTH\\_Tall\\_Buildings\\_Report\\_24\\_07\\_17.pdf](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Planning-and-building-control/Strategic-Planning/Local-Plan/Evidence_base_2016_Local_Plan/LBTH_Tall_Buildings_Report_24_07_17.pdf);

[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/residents\\_experience\\_of\\_high-density\\_housing\\_in\\_london\\_lse\\_-\\_final\\_report\\_july\\_2018.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/residents_experience_of_high-density_housing_in_london_lse_-_final_report_july_2018.pdf)

## CONTEXT

Tower Hamlets Council has the highest housing target in the current London Plan. With limited land available for new development, significant emphasis has been placed on optimising housing density to deliver sufficient new homes.

One of the key findings from previous research on high-density housing<sup>2</sup> is the challenge to create mixed and balanced communities in these schemes. It's often been assumed that by living in close proximity, residents engage in shared activities and develop social networks. However evidence from the council's fieldwork does not support this. It's important to understand the barriers to social connectedness in order to generate solutions so that high-density housing residents feel part of a wider group. It is also important to explore how they can integrate with the wider community.

## PROJECT

The project looks at the impact of high-density high-rise environments on residents' quality of life and seeks to provide best practice design guidelines to inform future regeneration projects. This project seeks to achieve social integration by setting out principles for successful integration of uses, tenure, spaces etc. A Lab commenced in April 2018 with extensive fieldwork and an in-depth analysis of nine development sites exploring how residents experience living in high-density buildings in the borough.

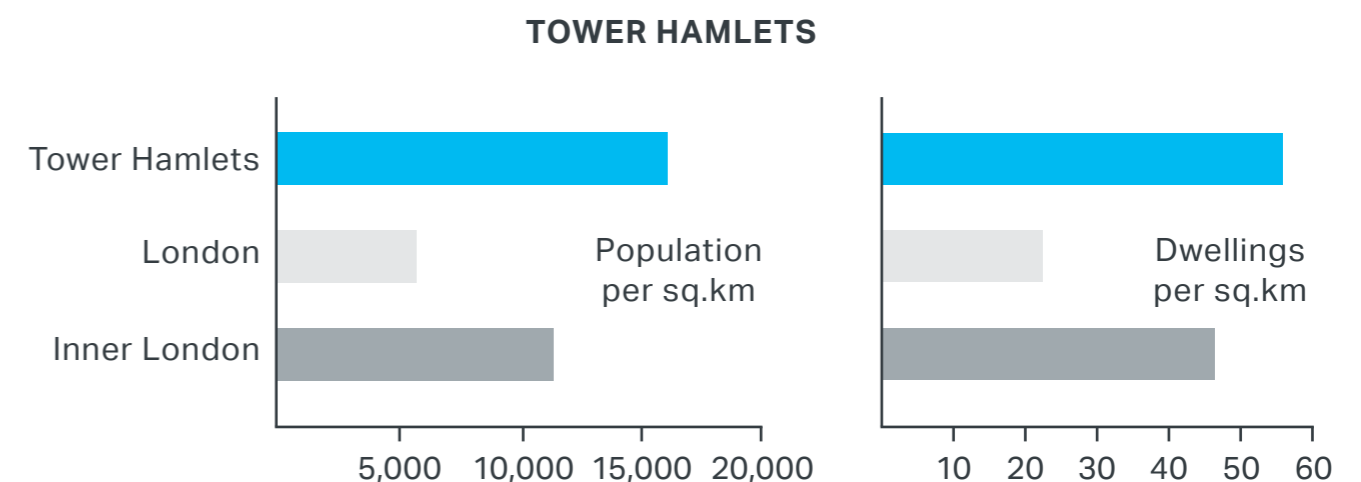
At the beginning of the project, the council used a set of indicators to structure conversations with residents and stakeholders. Isolation and loneliness were recurrent themes, highlighting the need to provide spaces for residents to meet. Children's quality of life was another key factor. In order to be physically and mentally healthy, social connections with other children and adults are fundamental. Lastly, the project responds to the challenge of providing safe outdoor spaces for residents, as in most of the schemes visited, antisocial behaviour inhibits residents' desire to meet and socialise outside their flats.

## PROCESS

Significant engagement work had already been undertaken prior to the Lab, and the work offered opportunities to identify some of the gaps in evidence from that prior research - regarding residents' relationships, and enabling the identification of areas that needed further engagement.

### During the Lab programme further research was undertaken with:

- Residents living in the high-density blocks.
- The community living around those blocks.



Source: Census 2001, Census 2011, Housing Flows Reconciliation, the Greater London Authority and Regional Assembly joint returns. GLA 2016-based population projections (housing-led model) and Office for National Statistics Mid-year Estimates.



Tower Hamlets  
Credit: Jim Stephenson



**At a later stage, ideas for testing and prototyping include:**

- Making use of communal corridors as doorstep playing areas.
- Temporarily having concierges in lobbies.

The feasibility of these tests is being explored in conversation with stakeholders and housing associations; they would offer significant learnings to inform the next stages of this work.

- 1. Talking to other council services (not just housing) in order to get a holistic view is essential.**
- 2. Buildings and places are not just designed and built.** What happens in them needs to be programmed and managed too.
- 3. Make use of existing research and data to cross-check own results and enhance understanding.**
- 4. It's important to understand who the stakeholders are.** Make sure every effort has been made to access all the different groups affected by a particular change, project, or intervention within a community.



# Embedding Social Integration

Real-time projects have made clear where some of the biggest opportunities and challenges lie. Lab teams have been able to identify and utilise room for manoeuvre within the web of actors and processes involved in regeneration projects across London.

At a project delivery level, the tools of space, programming and governance can steer regeneration projects towards creating places which bring people together.

The ways in which consultation can be transformed by engagement and co-production have been well documented in this report. This lies at the very heart of expanding the possibilities for socially-just placemaking in the long-term - not just through the project outcomes it can enable but by the very process of engagement itself. Communities and diverse stakeholder groups deciding the future of their places together and with the council, is in itself

a meaningful and empowering experience that drives and sustains social integration.

Within local government, change can happen at multiple stages and levels. Participating teams challenged established working culture and practices. Cross-team collaboration and communication between previously silo-ed teams has been identified as a key change maker.

Additionally, doing fieldwork and participatory research with residents, groups and communities, not only enriched insights, but also changed established perceptions in-council.



Lab teams identified these 'key levers' that impact social integration:

#### **Cross-team working**

Currently outside of individual teams' roles, social integration impact requires cross-team council-wide coordination.

#### **Shifting from delivery to impact**

The ways of working within the Lab highlighted the effectiveness of switching from 'what we are doing' to 'why we are doing it': thinking in terms of what social impact our interventions can achieve, and how, rather than the immediate planning of activities.

#### **Co-production**

Engaging with people as equal partners in the creation of solutions requires a significant 'unlearning' across structures and processes which are considered standard in the delivery of regeneration projects. The role of the council officers in the Lab process shifted from experts to facilitators of co-production.

#### **Leadership and strategy**

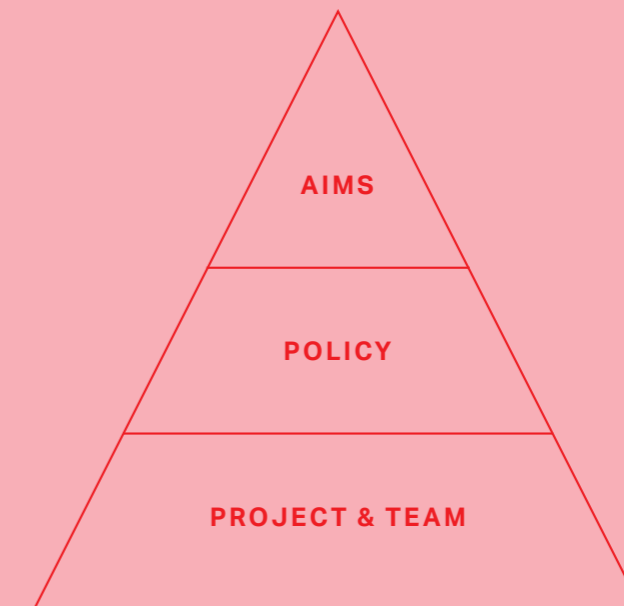
Individual projects can champion innovative approaches. But only overarching objectives and a council-wide vision supported at a strategic level can effect lasting structural change. It's therefore crucial for project-level breakthroughs to be mainstreamed with strategic support.

#### **Space and time**

Deeper community engagement was enabled by communication platforms and events. These required adequate resourcing in terms of time and space. In the same way, in-council collaboration and exchange can only be effective when adequately supported by the time and space necessary for it.

## LEVERS OF CHANGE

Snook's tool to map key levers of change to embed social integration.



The role of public procurement may prove catalytic for enabling a different set of targets and social integration measures, to be considered alongside traditional cost and quality metrics. This wasn't explored at the current stage of the projects in this Lab, but was discussed on numerous occasions. How different our places could be if we introduced an element of social value into the evaluation criteria for tender responses.

**Finally, planning policy offers key opportunities for introducing mechanisms that can drive the creation of inclusive spaces. Both the operation of section 106 to provide for more than infrastructure, and the role of a charter of principles for regeneration, are very promising directions to explore.**

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