

Centre for London

Developing trust: public participation in London's planning system

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British Library Knowledge Centre

Pecha kucha notes

Image 1 (sleeping)

Is this consultation fatigue!

If so – what is the cause. Boring events? One-way conversations? A lack of interest in you and what you have said? Flat and inaccurate reports? Is it that nothing ever happens? All comments I have heard

Maybe it's the consultation that's fatigued?

Image 2 (differences)

Consultation is a word, like 'regeneration' that's lost its elasticity and fallen into disrepute – it's in the same family as 'gentrification' and 'neoliberalism' is a cousin. It's not a happy family.

In the public mind 'consultation' suggests there is a proposal to be consulted on **rather than a process to achieve a shared ideal or to understand complex urban issues.**

We need deeper, richer layers of engagement to build understanding and trust.

Image 3 (Royal Dock aerial)

At the Royal Docks we are, through the 'Joining the Docks' programme simultaneously exploring engagement across three themes: -

- Cultural place making with big and small 'C' with CAS,
- Public realm and connectivity with 5th Studio
- Local economic development strategies with Hatch Regeneris.

This guards against consultation fatigue and connects with people in different ways.

Image 4 (Open dialogue)

Onto this has just been added 'dialogue' on the wider Opportunity Area Planning Framework for the GLA and LB Newham.

This is building 4 interwoven conversations, rather than each being discrete and self-contained - offering a greater opportunity for cross-over and joining dots the together... or is it Joining the Docks ...

Image 5 (Dots and docks)

If different themes of conversation (not just regen) are the first layers to add, then the second is do with locating that dialogue.

Over such a wide area it is pointless to stage centralised events and expect people to come.

We need to join the dots and the docks And here, I think we can agree, we have the solution (map of the docks with dots representing widely arranged events)

Image 6 (Pop ups)

So ... as for the previous map we recommend a wide array and types and locations of events – an immersive process.

Here are a few Walk and talks, urban excavation, street and field exhibitions, use of local hubs for discussions of all kinds, pop-up's in areas of high footfall to interact with a full cross section of the community ...

We need understand the place BEFORE we design. And then to work with local people to capture their ideas and feedback and ensure benefits are properly shared.

Image 7 (Mobile)

We need to be mobile ...

Mobile kit ... So here is our Milk Float, its clean, its green and it allows us to use the strapline 'floating ideas'.

OK – this is not 100% signed off. But this kit helps us to reach out and discover what is special about the neighbourhoods – right there, on the doorstep.

Image 8 (Structured worksheets)

What I am saying is that all types of dialogue and co-production are required each with different outcomes and areas of focus. These include highly structured exchanges which break down design issues into bight sized chunks so all can contribute. And then we re-assimilate.

On-the-ground work sensitizes us to hyper local issues.

So – we need to use wider forms of engagement, to listen harder, to experience local conditions and to form relationships that matter.

Good - but we need to dig deeper How?

Image 9 (deeper 1 - Analyses)

First, all information collected should be analysed, interpreted and represented. This is a creative process building understandings of complex social, economic and spatial issues.

Share these findings at each stage. Is this right?

- London Olympics differences
- Kings Cross 'thought map' initial ideas > topics > themes > key concepts
- Kings Cross heat map - Spot the triplet.

Image 10 (deeper 2 - Clear and lucid representation)

Second - All writing and communication need to be lucid and engaging.

Report back regularly to show you are really listening and to check your findings and /or the changes you are making are what was wanted. Similarly, if you can't make changes requested – explain why. Keep people in the loop.

Image 11 (deeper 3 - digital tools / infographics)

Third - Interactive digital tools and website infographics need to be integral though not stand-alone. On its own digital engagement cannot build meaningful relationships and may miss chance encounters and serendipity – so woven up in complex urban conditions.

We increasingly use Google Docs, Interactive Maps, Place Shaping Apps etc – so ‘findings’ can be added to as well as shared - building transparency, trust and a platform for co-production.

- Brent Cross South agenda shaping platform
- Kings Cross historical analytics (in connection with place naming)

Image 12 (deeper 4 – empowering community)

Fourth - Every project should work closely with and empower local people through capacity building and support **and to help the community to support itself. Its all about RESPECT!**

We are working with the Royal Docks Team to build a Community Fund very recently launched at the Good Hotel. Its not especially large, £1 - £2,000 grants. But organisations don't have to be registered – so, hopefully we can reach deeper and quicker.

Image 13 (deeper 5 – skilling and training)

Fifth. Recognise that local people want a share of the benefits – not just to participate in shaping plans. Supporting apprenticeships, training and skilling have become central to the best projects.

Broader social value programmes and initiatives are the next area to tackle to build communities, social resilience and integration.

Image 14 (deeper 6 – working with young people)

Sixth – Make working with young people integral – discover more! They have no fixed agendas, are open to new ideas, are usually positive – young people have a lot to contribute.

Two extraordinary snippets from Kings Cross 15 years ago – Argent getting local buy-in through Roger Madelin’s footballing skills, demonstrated during an afternoon spent with the Bemmerton Estate youths. Stuart Purvis (then head of ITN) taking Patrick to meet his hero (Trevor Macdonald) at the ITN news studios where he later became a cub reporter – both in connection with our youth outreach.

Multiple ‘little stories’ like this help to build real relationships.

Image 15 (deeper 7 – Meanwhile)

And 7th – Recognise the potential of ‘meanwhile’ - as projects get ever bigger, and delivery periods ever longer – meanwhile is becoming a strategic aspect of development.

The opportunities for playfulness and being outside normal strictures makes the area attractive to youth, cultural operators and pop-up start-up spaces.

Industri[us] – a pop-up upcycling facility (including recycling a large proportion of the Chelsea Flower show). A kind of incubator come makeshift market.

So – aim for layered engagement, creative exchange, a real understanding of complexity and real co-production, something useful, meaningful and pleasurable for all – join the dots!