

## **Meeting Notes: Southwark Land Commission Meeting ONE**

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Venue:** 160, Tooley Street

### **Attendees:**

Commission members: Miatta Fahnbulleh (chair), Cllr James McAsh (co-chair), Anna Minton, Mark Brearley, Peter Elliot, Henrietta Moore, Chris Brown, Janine Rowe, Jonathan Sedgwick, Shade Abdul, Akwesi Osei, Anood Al-Samerai, Dolly Oladini (online)

Advisor: Neil McInroy (online)

Project team - Daniel Partridge, Chris Paddock, Malavika Krishnan (PRD), Holly Lewis (We Made That)

Council representatives – Joseph Brown, Stephen Gaskell, Danny Edwards, Alix Macfarlane, Nazmin Yeahia

**Apologies:** Phillip Villars (PMV Planning)

### **Meeting notes:**

Key points from the discussion are listed as follows:

#### **1. Introduction and Session Opener**

- Roundtable introductions of attendees
- Brief introduction of the focus of the session

Points from the chair:

- Attendees were asked to think about what success looks like and a word to describe how to get there together.
- Three months to do a big piece of work.
- This project aims to challenge the status quo – moving beyond where key partners (council and/ or others) are now.
- Hope for this to be a landmark activity and a catalyst for change.

Round of introductions from the table and their inputs on what success should look like.

#### **Keywords from the group:**

- Practical radicalism, empowering communities, innovative ideas for communities' equity, not being a talking show, unlocking expertise and money innovatively for the community, open and collaborative, real, inclusive curiosity, radical changes – big ideas and bold vision (radical and bold), transformation, listen to the communities, transparency, brave, legacy, influence, enabling and impact.

Summary from the introduction discussions from members of the commission:

- The commission needs to support big ideas and bold visions to see radical changes. The ambition for the actions is to be tangible, real, and deliverable. The commission aims to unlock the potential within the community and support transformational changes through empowerment. The commission also recognises issues around funding and premises and the need to create genuinely affordable community spaces throughout the borough.
- Short-term actions: Site-specific interventions that are tangible.
- Longer-term actions: Changing perceptions on how land and property are seen with radical and bold ideas, and a starting point to changes across the UK. Also, embedding the process into the council's way of working and supporting systemic changes.

The chair concludes the first part of the session by acknowledging that the commissioners set the terms of working through this process. A clear direction was achieved on what sort of commission this must be and how to get there.

## 2. Delivering Our Aim: What is Possible?

Daniel Partridge, from PRD, presented PRD's presentation to provide context. Neil McInroy provided insights from the Liverpool Commission.

### Key points from Neil McInroy:

- Dig deep – Question the idea that land is a commodity. Think about future ownerships around land. Acknowledge that this is an opportunity for Southwark.
- Frame a vision.
- Transparency and surfacing.
- The art of the possible – set out what are the things we can do. Good things are happening in Southwark – what are the things that are already happening that we could amplify, scale up and use elsewhere?

### Points from Neil on some of the barriers to delivering the land commission recommendations.

- 1) Complexity of the task
- 2) Boldness – Who is the zealous nut/ who is the brave one? Who is going to do stuff?
- 3) Consciousness – There is a sort of detachment on the serious questions about land. Land is considered a key driver of the economy.

Dolly Oladini offered to share some of the best practice examples from C40 on sustainable city transformations and sustainable planning pathways.

Questions and clarifications:

- Opportunity to understand the process from previous examples and precedents.
- A representative from public health is missing from the commission.
- Council sometimes works in silos as well. Think about how to navigate and engage with other departments in the council.

Other commissioners and Miatta also agree to add a health representative to the commission.

### Three actions:

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| 1. Reaching out to health colleagues to be part of the commission (note that Dolly brings health expertise, but Partnership Southwark was also mentioned). |
| 2. Collate pre-reading for the Commission: reports from C40, HoL report, VCS report and other precedents.  |
| 3. Presentation at SLC 2 about learnings from the Liverpool LC (barriers/implementation)   |

## 3. Setting Principles and Parameters for What We Want to Achieve

The commission members and attendees break into two groups to think about key principles.

### Key priorities from Group 1, (presented by Dan Partridge):

- Connecting different challenges
- Understanding more clearly what's out there – through mapping on access, impacts on the community such as affordability.
- Bringing people together
- Transparency
- Understand the cost of what happens in the borough to the people.
- Challenges around best value and how this can constrain/enable local authority actions.

Other points:

- Understanding the scale of the challenge – if it's too big, the progress is slow. It should be slow and incremental with practical recommendations.
- Real need to focus on neighbourhoods – recognising local knowledge and needs.
- Agency and empowerment – Make decisions about allocations of resources.
- Looking for frameworks to address challenges.
- Alternative models of ownership
- Cooperative models are an idea that worked for Black and African Communities.
- Engagement around assets
- Priorities/ What not to focus on: Is food growing the right priority? Rights to access food is a bigger challenge. How does access to food fit within the land commission?

Key priorities from Group 2, (presented by Chris Paddock):

- Equity, the principle of moving control to the locality, practicality about testing and learning – A framework involving social value? The term is contested. It is about Community benefit – or better, public value. Simplify the language.
- Parameters of; planning, stewardship, capacity within civil societies and communities, recognizing capacity issues for public authorities, and problems around trust and ownership.
- Contesting the notion of land as a commodity for commercial ends.
- It is a fool's errand to map all the land in the borough and who owns it but do it within a local context. Identifying sites so some of this can be tested. Identifying target neighbourhoods and mapping all the land ownership might be better suited.
- Effectively use the collective lobbying power of this group.

The chair summarises the points from both groups to propose an initial set of guiding principles to reflect upon.

**An initial set of guiding principles:**

1. Whole systems approach
2. Bringing people together – humanity
3. Transparency
4. Neighbourhood control / local impact
5. Agency and empowerment
6. Alternative ownership/ community ownership
7. Market and government failure
8. Social value/ community benefit – equity and fairness
9. Catalytic shift

Reflections from the group on the principles:

- The temporality of the process: Is it too soon to come to conclusions on principles?
- Structure: There needs to be an idea of a cultural shift pilot for something that can be a wider change.
- There are overlaps in there but understanding and having a transparent clear framework of how things operate.
- Definitions around the guiding principles.

The chair proposes to reflect on the principles and let them settle in. The project team will add definitions and expand on each principle, to be discussed in the next session.

#### **4. Approach to Engagement Alongside the SLC**

Daniel Partridge (PRD) gives an overview of the engagement planned. Holly Lewis (WMT) explained the approach to proposed community stakeholder engagement.

Discussion on engagement:

- The commission members would like to see the list of invitees and provide inputs if any organizations are missing.

- Risk of some groups being underrepresented.
- Concerns were raised about the structure. Food growing is not that important. Climate and biodiversity are not included in the themes.
- An open call for ideas and or evidence was proposed by several members of the commission.
- Is this too much to do in a short period? Are three meetings enough?

Chair raises the question if the meetings can be three hours instead of two.

Cllr James McAsh explains what is guiding the timeline and possible flexibilities keeping in mind limitations on resources and budget.

## 5. Comms Plan Briefing

Alix Macfarlane explained the comms strategy.

## 6. Closing Comments and Next Steps

### Further actions:

- Invite a representative from public health (note, Dolly has significant expertise, but Partnership Southwark was also mentioned).
- Ahead of the next session sharing of precedents, and other useful reading material:
  - Start to gather precedents and ask SLC members to do the same.
  - HoL report on Land to be shared.
  - C40 sustainable planning pathway information to be shared.
- At the next commission, an update from the Liverpool LC / Neil about its delivery experience (appraisal of barriers faced and what was achieved) would be useful.
- Expand on / refine the 8 guiding principles adding definitions and context. This will be done ahead of the next meeting to provide time for reflections and will be taken up in the next session.
- Community Stakeholder engagement: Think about ways to engage communities in a more ongoing way – consider the call for ideas and create a legacy that extends beyond the SLC sessions. Explore ways to activate members in these sessions. Question about whether the themes were right.
- Timeline – The SLC will not go for a year but will try to extend within a reasonable period. This will be discussed considering the resources and capacity of the Southwark council and project team.
- Have SLC meetings for an extra hour, starting earlier.
- Commissioners to take away what's discussed and reflect with colleagues and existing networks.
- Peter Elliot to source land data for TFL and Network Rail.

### Further actions for PRD/WMT:

- Expand on the 8 guiding principles, adding definitions and context ahead of the next session.
- Prepare pre-reading for the Commission on other precedents.
- Collate other reading materials (C40 report, House of Lords report)
- Community stakeholder engagement – We Made That /PRD will share the list of invitees with members of the commission considering GDPR obligations.
- PRD to share the details of the community stakeholder engagement and Southwark Youth Parliament session with members of the commission to encourage interest to join.
- We Made That to speak with Chris Brown about community stakeholder engagement.

### Further Actions to follow up from Council:

- Council to review the timeline and structure of SLC to accommodate more meetings for commissioners and further community stakeholder engagement.
- Public health representative
- Sample sites for SLC consideration.