

5.0 LISTEN AND DISCOVER: ENGAGEMENT

5.0 LISTEN AND DISCOVER: ENGAGEMENT

5.1. THEMATIC WORKSHOPS

- 5.1.1.** Publica conducted six typology workshops with people or manage or operate a facility and VCS to understand how facilities spaces are used and support soft infrastructure and outline any opportunities, challenges and risks for community services and assets.
- 5.1.2.** The sessions aimed to:
- Spark conversations/narratives/stories about their community facilities or networks which could be used for case studies.
 - Sense check findings of mapping already done.
 - Understand strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges.
 - Encourage debate about issues of these facilities, how the council can support them.
 - Encourage discussion about the type of services they support and any interconnections between the facilities.
- 5.1.3.** Attendees of the workshops are set out on this spread and headlines from the discussions are outlined on the following pages which demonstrate a series of common themes and typology specific comments and feedback. It should be noted that the headlines represent the views and opinions of the attendees.

5.1.4. The common themes across typologies were:

- **Provision:** Facilities are not currently meeting demand due to increase in population and lack of space particularly for young people across the borough. A lot of services are outgrowing their current space and applications for development are primarily to extend existing premises.
- **Multi-purpose:** Neutral or multi-use spaces are in demand but need to carefully coordinate to ensure services are complimentary and do not exclude specific cultural needs.
- **Visibility:** Centralised portal of available services and space is required for the borough, which would encourage participation and be a more efficient use of current assets.
- **Fit for purpose:** Ageing building stock creates a challenge for organisations and facility managers.
- **Affordability:** Maintenance and costs of running a facility is a core challenge.
- **Management:** Safeguarding and health and safety are the fundamental challenges to providing community services in community facilities.
- **Social integration and participation:** Co-location provides a good opportunity to strengthen the community and build relationships.

5.2. ATTENDEES

5.2.1. Voluntary community sector

- Aston Mansfield
- Citizens Advice
- Community Links
- Food Alliance
- PEACH
- Plaistow Jamia Mosque

5.2.2. Community Centres and libraries

- Carpenter and Dockland Centre
- Rosetta Arts
- Royal Docks Learning and Activity Centre
- Royal Wharf Community Dock
- West Silvertown Foundation

5.2.3. Places and worship and faith groups

- Ascension Community Trust
- Cranbrook Synagogue
- Newham Muslim Forum
- RDWA North Woolwich
- Transform Newham

5.2.4. Cultural facilities and pubs*

- Arbyte Gallery
- Discover Children's Story Centre
- UD Music
- Theatre Royal Stratford East
- Cart & Horses*
- Arch 1

5.2.5. Educations spaces and exhibition halls

- Ellen Wilkinson Primary School (Primary, Community School)
- Forest Gate Community School (Secondary, Academy converter, Community Schools Trust)
- Godwin Junior School (Junior, Community school)
- Kingsford Community School (Secondary, Community School)
- London Stadium Learning (Education Provision, Free school alternative provision)
- Newham College (16+ Further Education)
- Newham Community School Trust (NCST) (Secondary, Academy Converter)
- Stratford School Academy (Secondary, Academy Converter)
- The Tapscott Learning Trust (Primary, Academy Converter)
- Old Tower Hall Stratford (Townhouse complex)
- Tereza Joannen (Event Venue)

5.2.6. Youth Zones

- Forest Gate Youth Zone (LBN run)
- Shipman Youth Zone (LBN run)
- Stratford Youth Zone (LBN run)
- Youth Empowerment (LBN run)
- Youth Service SM/Curriculum (LBN run)

* One pub is represented in the culture workshops. It should be noted that despite attending the same session, their operational requirements and needs are quite different.

5.0 LISTEN AND DISCOVER: ENGAGEMENT THEMATIC WORKSHOPS

5.3. VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SECTOR

There are organisations who don't currently have space to provide services to the community. Smaller affordable spaces are required for start-up services.

5.3.1. Provision of facilities, services and future need:

- A variety of spaces are required which can accommodate one-to-one private advisory services and larger spaces for community gatherings. Catering facilities and spaces to provide meals are a future need for the elderly community.
- Newham could learn from neighbouring boroughs where community hubs have been established to provide shared space for council and voluntary services.

5.3.2. Loss and gain

- It was observed that vital community services were lost when there was a change of ownership or management from the community to the council.

5.3.3. Risks and challenges

- Accessibility is a core concern as buildings do not have the right equipment such as lifts to allow access to upper floors.
- Stricter planning regulations for historic frontages mean there are limited ways to make services and activities visible externally.

- Available storage is a practical challenge restricting organisations from hiring space or keeping equipment on site.

5.3.4. Affordability

- The overheads of running a building can be financially challenging.
- Education buildings share space with organisations however typically offer it at a commercial market rate.
- People are required to travel further to access facilities in the borough, however this does not suit some residence due to concerns about safety and cost.

5.4. COMMUNITY CENTRES AND LIBRARIES

New developments in the borough offer huge opportunity to provide community spaces that are future proofed and address future need.

5.4.1. Provision of facilities, services and future need:

- Many facilities have shared services across the borough with multiple organisations using the spaces.
- Post-Covid-19 there has been an increase in demand for job and recruitment services.
- Community could benefit from additional space in school and education premises. This would correlate with demand for evening activities and services at a time when schools are no longer being used for education.

5.4.2. Risks and challenges

- Historic building stock often does not have the right equipment to be accessible for example, lifts and step free access to the building.
- New developments often attract people due to newer facilities and infrastructure however do not always provide for local needs.

5.4.3. Affordability

- New developments are offering community uses within buildings at a discounted rate.
- Users of the services are asking for free courses however many organisations are bound by set charges. People cannot participate for free unless they are unemployed or on right universal credit scheme.
- As a result of Covid-19, some people are not actively participating in community uses due to costs.

5.4.4. Social integration and participation

- The co-location of facilities and services helps to create a variety of activities in the same space, providing opportunities for more people to use the facility.
- There has been a notable drop in participation of elderly activities since Covid-19.

5.5 PLACES OF WORSHIP AND FAITH GROUPS

The pandemic has highlighted that a faith space isn't just a place where people go to worship. Most places of worship have opened up foodbanks and other activities.

5.5.1. Provision of facilities, services and future need:

- The faith community is very varied with varied needs and characteristics. As much as there is a need for mutual and shared space, there is also a need for specific types of spaces to attract all members of community.
- Beckton and Royal Docks Community Neighbourhood has a huge need for places of worship, in particular the Muslim community who require space throughout the day for prayer.
- Faith groups are primarily located between Barking and Romford Road – lots of people live in those spaces but not many facilities north or south of these boundaries.
- It was stated that local communities travel 30-60 minutes on average to reach places of worship.
- Many different types of community facility are being re-purposed and used by faith groups not just for worship but to host a range of community services and activities. Education spaces have been used in other boroughs for places

5.0 LISTEN AND DISCOVER: ENGAGEMENT

of worship and for youth services. As a typology, they are often located in the community/residential areas which makes access and participation greater.

- Many churches in Newham are looking for development opportunities to provide affordable housing and are looking for ways to work with the council.

5.5.2. Affordability

- Many faith groups own their own buildings and are willing to invest in building stock however maintenance is a huge cost to the community.
- Longer-leases with private landlords are harder to control and unaffordable.

5.5.3. Social integration

- Faith spaces play a very important in people's lives. Places of worship anchor people to places and support more sustainable communities and longer-lasting stable communities.
- For people that are new to the borough they are often the first place that they associate themselves with to build networks and meet other people.
- Many traditional and non-traditional places of worship share facilities with different faiths.

5.6. CULTURAL FACILITIES AND PUBS

A central cultural hub would benefit Newham, to provide a networking space and focal point in the community for culture.

5.6.1. Provision of facilities, services and future need:

- Facilities are offered at low-cost to support low-income households and make provision to address digital poverty.
- Clustering of cultural facilities is effective for increasing the perception of safety after dark.
- In the past year, there has been an increase in demand for co-working and more project-based temporary spaces. Currently spaces in studios or other facilities often only offer long-term leases.
- Consider sharing equipment as well as space to address digital poverty across Newham.
- As the demographic profile of Newham changes there is demand for entertainment and cultural infrastructure. To address this pubs are diversifying their activities to include alternative cultural services.

5.6.2. Loss and gain

- A number of pubs across the borough have not reopened since Covid-19 due to inability to meet social distancing

regulations. Those that have the financial and spatial means, have altered operations or undergone refurbishment to provide food or outside seating.

5.6.3. Risks and challenges

- Long-standing facilities and venues in the community frequently obtain noise complaints by new housing developments.
- Adapting buildings for community use is much more difficult and costly than building new fit-for-purpose facilities.
- Brexit has impacted cultural facilities and pubs altering supply chains between Europe and UK. Facilities managers are looking to source more locally which has sustainability and local economic benefits however adds significant cost.

5.6.4. Social integration and participation

- Cultural facilities benefit from working in partnership to make the most of resources and space to support and enhance business and work of organisations.

5.7. EDUCATION SPACES AND EXHIBITION HALLS

Schools who don't currently make their facilities available to the community would like to do so however there are a range of challenges that create barriers to implement this.

5.7.1. Provision of facilities, services and future need:

- Demand for space is primarily at the weekend but schools don't have enough staff working those days which is a core barrier to sharing school facilities.
- To date, facilities are shared via word of mouth. A centralised portal would provide an opportunity to outline terms and conditions for hiring space in specific facilities as well as opening times and other community information.
- There is financial and community value to hiring out spaces however as the primary function of the building is for education, it becomes a relatively low priority.
- Schools without shared spaces would like to provide community use however there are a raft of challenges to undertake this.

5.7.2. Risks and challenges

- Safeguarding restrictions set out a series of guidelines that impact the design and operations of the building.

5.0 LISTEN AND DISCOVER: ENGAGEMENT

5.8. YOUTH ZONES

More effective synergy is required between LBN planning and Youth Zones. Actively engaging young people in co-design of centres will embed local need.

5.8.1. Provision of facilities, services and future need:

- Provision for younger people is needed. Youth Zones are well used however are lacking in the east of the borough.

5.8.2. Risks and challenges

- Operational requirements are quite specific for Youth Zones and facilities are often under resourced.
- Local perception of Youth Zones are often mixed and can be negative. Young people want to use external space but is often viewed as anti-social or noisy. Focus on education has been helpful in changing perception in the borough.

5.8.3. Affordability

- Regularising leases and reducing private landlord costs would help to reduce risk for facilities.
- Facilities are given similar operational budget from the council despite varying change in facility size and capacity/ type of services provided.

5.8.4. Social integration and participation

- Safety for children is a core concern and barrier to participation. Street-scape lighting, lack of activation after dark and transport connections are all contributing factors.
- Multi-generational and inter-generational programmes help facilitate activities for multiple groups and boosts participation of younger people.

