

Unlocking Assets Project Group Meeting

16.10.15 at London Funders

Caroline Forster (chair of the meeting) welcomed participants to the meeting. Attendees confirmed that there were no comments further to the notes from the previous meeting.

Unlocking Assets via Neighbourhood Planning and Urban Parish Councils

Lorraine Hart, Community Land Use

Presentation available [here](#)

This presentation, led by Lorraine Hart, Community Land Use, looked at asset identification and development through the exercise of the powers of Neighbourhood Planning, Right to Bid and the establishment of Neighbourhood Councils in London. Lorraine has been carrying out a lot of research in this area and would be compiling all the findings over the coming months.

Neighbourhood Planning in London

Applications are spread throughout London although there is a lot of hostility to it in some boroughs. Neighbourhood planning has only been in place since the Localism Act in 2012.

- 79 applications for area and forum designations (Westminster and Camden top, 13 boroughs none at all)
- 46 designated
- 4 refused (hackney, tower hamlets and Hammersmith and Fulham)
- 3 plans submitted to the local planning authority
- 2 been through independent examination
- 2 “made” (Camden and Kensington and Chelsea)

The Right to Bid in London

This is a localism right and an opportunity for a group to nominate land/ a building so that if it is put up for sale in the future, they will get the first opportunity to bid for it.

- 215 assets in total agreed - Bexley, Camden, Bromley, Greenwich and Haringey have most, 2 have none at all)
- 68 nominations unsuccessful
- Triggered sales – 20 mainly pubs but also 3 community buildings and 2 libraries
- Top types of asset:
- 71 pubs
- 50 community buildings
- 37 allotments
- 14 green spaces
- 13 sports and recreational buildings

The Right to Build in London

There is no data available on the use of neighbourhood development orders in London.

Groups can pursue this through a neighbourhood plan process. It can be quite nuanced and so a lot of groups may not know what they can do.

Neighbourhood councils in London

To create a neighbourhood council, you need to be able to prove that there's support for the idea, and also need the Local Authority to take it seriously, so can often be a big process which is in the hands of local government and local politicians.

- Queens park <http://www.queensparkcommunitycouncil.gov.uk/>
14 councillors elected. Small grants programme, community development events and projects, statutory consultee on planning applications
- London Fields <http://londonfieldscouncil.org.uk/>
There has been no activity to take this forward since february 2014
- Other np areas
 - 2 neighbourhood plan areas have considered their future potential governance arrangements and activities post-neighbourhood plan completion which have included the establishment of a community council.

Main reasons cited not to proceed are – lack of enthusiasm from local councils, the inability to give local businesses in a neighbourhood plan area a role and the work involved in completing the process

Unlocking power locally

- Governance and power

Neighbourhood forums – the power to plan for land and buildings without political parties

Neighbourhood councils – power to tax and provide services

Unlocking resources

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Up to 25% of cil generated in an agreed neighbourhood plan area can be spent in the area
- Neighbourhood council precepts - Queens park precept totalled £136,897 for 2014/2015

Unlocking assets: keys needed!

- Integration – community rights and urban parishing is not offered in an integrated way to communities at borough level
- Work to increase receptivity of local politicians
- Support for those that want to take advantages of them strategically directed at areas or types of asset

There was time for questions and discussion on the presentation:

- A local authority representative noted that ACV applications can be very few. It is also very dependent on the relationships with the community groups and how much they are able to take ownership of the process – an important consideration for the local authority is how to manage that relationship. In addition, a lot of councils now don't have a community engagement department, and there are less CVS organisations who are able to take on that kind of support for community groups.
- The group expressed their interest in a lot of the information provided by Lorraine and would appreciate an update once her research is complete.

Open discussion

- The group discussed the relationships between local councils and parish councils, and the complexities in this area. There is often a capacity gap in being able to maintain good communication and relationships.
- Some community groups are trying to build links between health estates and communities – there may be some support possible by independent funders in the form of capital build.
- It could be helpful at a future session to have a presentation/ workshop from boroughs working on particular projects, to outline any extra help/ support which may be needed from independent foundations. Are there lessons now which could get funders thinking differently about how they fund? This may not just be about capital, but also how charities find the revenue to create a multi-use space and to provide capacity support.
- Expertise is needed in the sector on building management and diversity of income streams
- Possibilities discussed for future meetings
 - London Marathon Charitable Trust to outline their work in this area
 - NHS Property Services and Community Health Partnerships – health estates. The initial reports will be completed in December 2015. Representatives from LB Barnet and LB Enfield to discuss and consider presenting the LA perspective in a 2016 meeting.
 - A larger event to present some of the issues in this area and topics covered by the network to the wider London Funders membership – could be a way to look at best practice and encourage wider learning. The Unlocking Assets network should consider what best practice should look like.
- It would be helpful to have a London Councils representative attending these meetings.

Next meeting

The next meeting will now take place on 22 January 2016 10 am - 12 noon, London Funders

Participants

Kemar Walford	Big Lottery Fund
Hasanul Hoque	Camden Town Unlimited
Kirstin Ross	CAN
Jaishree Mistry	Charity Bank
Lorraine Hart	Community Land Use (Speaker)
Anya Whitehead	Heritage Lottery Fund
Adam Driscoll	London Borough of Barnet
Catherine Mousdale	London Borough of Barnet
Jeffrey Hopwood	London Borough of Camden
Neil Webster	London Borough of Enfield
Kashmir Takhar	London Borough of Harrow
Sarah Ridley	London Marathon Charitable Trust
Caroline Forster	Social Investment Business (Chair)

In attendance

Becky Green, London Funders