

Regeneration Committee – 1 March 2016

Transcript of Agenda Item 7 – Public Consultation and its Impact on Regeneration Projects

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): Welcome to all of you and thank you very much indeed for giving us your time today.

Cath [Shaw], I am going to start with you, if I may, and ask you what the local authority view is in your experience on consulting the public on new developments and what this adds to the development process.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): I am happy to answer that. Do you want me to start by outlining the scheme or is everybody familiar with the scheme?

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): It probably would help, actually. Some Members around the table are familiar; others less so.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): Brent Cross Cricklewood was identified in the Mayor's London Plan as an Opportunity Area for 10,000 homes. Of those, around 2,000 to 2,500 are being delivered at an estate regeneration called West Hendon. The remainder are being delivered at the Brent Cross Cricklewood scheme.

Brent Cross is a very large scheme. It involves the doubling of the size of the Brent Cross Shopping Centre, the delivery of 7,500 new homes and enough space for 27,000 jobs, and also significant infrastructure, both hard infrastructure in terms of changes to the North Circular, particularly the M1/A406 junction, the A41/A406 junction and the A5/A406 junction – so that is significant work on the North Circular – and also social infrastructure, which I understand is of particular interest today, in terms of improvements to parks and playing fields, new and replacement schools, health centres, a leisure centre and so on. It is a very significant scheme.

It was originally all going to be delivered by Hammerson and Standard Life [Investments], who are the owners of the shopping centre. They took a decision at around the turn of the decade that they wanted to focus on the shopping centre part of the scheme and so we worked with them for the Council to take the lead on the south side development, which is the residential and commercial development, and also the delivery of a new station. In March 2015, we announced that we had identified Argent Related as our preferred partner for the south side. You will, I am sure, be very familiar with Argent because they have led on the regeneration of King's Cross, which is very well known in London. The Related Company is perhaps less well known. It is one of America's largest developers and is leading on a big regeneration scheme in Manhattan called Hudson Yards, which has a lot of over-track development at the back of the one of the stations. They are very experienced and also have very good experience of private rented sector accommodation at large scale. We will, subject to our committee's views, in the middle of this month shortly be entering into a contract with Argent and then we can really start to get going on the south side scheme.

Hopefully, that was a very quick overview. As you can see, there are many moving parts. I probably should have said the third element of the scheme, where we are very grateful for the Greater London Authority's

(GLA) support, is delivering a new station. We have been working with central Government and London government to secure public-sector funding for early delivery of the station, which makes the scheme viable.

Yes, there is an enormous amount of social infrastructure and we absolutely would support the view that community consultation adds value in making sure we get the right social infrastructure. Obviously, there are lots of other factors we need to take into account as well, such as pupil projections for schools. We need to be aware of the fact that there will be a new community in the new housing that does not yet exist and so we do not know who those people are yet and therefore cannot consult with them.

For some of the social infrastructure, particularly large things like Clitterhouse Playing Fields, which is a very significant area of playing fields, they will have a wider attraction than just the immediate local community. For example, neighbours in Brent and Camden might be expecting to use those playing fields over time. We certainly would be very keen to get community involvement. Indeed, one of the key factors in appointing Argent Related as our preferred partner for the south side was their very strong track record on community engagement at King's Cross and their very strong proposals for Brent Cross in terms of involving the community.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): Do you think that local people understand what the consultation process is and what it is not?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): I am sure they will speak for themselves very shortly, but in such a long-term and large scheme that has had a number of changes of direction, it has not been possible to set out from day one - and day one in this scheme you can trace back to the late 1990s but really it was around the mid-2000s - a very clear plan of consultation that we would then have been able to deliver through because we have had these changes of position.

Certainly significant parts of the local community have had some early engagement with Argent Related and are feeling, I hope, quite confident that they are genuinely listening and that, although we are not at the stage yet of coming forward with firm proposals, they understand that the first stage is to listen. I would not claim that we have managed to reach all of the local community groups. Certainly our intention is to get to as many as possible over time, but we are with Argent Related at the very early days and so we would not say we are there yet. As I have just said to one of the local residents, if she is aware of groups that we have not yet engaged with, please give us their details because we are keen to talk to as many people as possible.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): With complex regeneration, particularly long-term schemes such as those that you have outlined, any change brings uncertainty --

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): Of course.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): -- and uncertainty often brings opposition and anxiety. Do you view consultation as a process of informing people or an open-minded, "Yes or no, should we go ahead with this?"

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): First and foremost, it is a process of listening to people. It depends where you are in the process. If you are talking about a formal planning consultation, it has a very specific technical role. With the stage we are at in the south side - where we have an approved masterplan but it is a parameter plan and so it has blocks but we have not looked at the detail - it is really about understanding what their concerns are. Are their concerns about the

process of change or the outcome? What are the things that people value in their local area that they want to see preserved through the process? What are the things that people are keen to see change and the opportunities that they can see? First and foremost, it is a process of listening.

Obviously, as you get further through the process, it becomes about testing ideas: "We have listened to what you have said. We have taken that information along with all the other information that we have" - for example, the pupil projections and all the other things we need to meet about the money in terms of making sure the scheme can be delivered - "and here is our interpretation back to you of what we have put together as a result of that listening and thinking", and then at that point testing, "Have we heard right? Have we interpreted it right? How could it be improved?"

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): You see it is a dynamic process that evolves as time goes on?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): Yes, absolutely.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): Ciron [Edwards], why do you think that it is important to engage with communities early in a planning process?

Ciron Edwards (Associate Director, Soundings): It is essential to engage with them early and at exactly the right time so that they can actually inform any decisions and to ensure that they are very well informed when that decision is made. Just to make you aware, Argent Related has appointed us to carry out consultation for Brent Cross South and I am not going to comment on any of it because, as Cath [Shaw] said, we are very much at the beginning. I am not working directly on that project as well, just to be clear.

One of the challenges we face as a company is when we are brought into a project. As you have just heard, a lot of decisions have already been made about this project and we have been brought in to work with Argent Related and help them to consult the community. However, we already have a set of parameters that have been given consent and so we have a certain environment to work within, which makes it extremely challenging for us. Part of that is to inform and make sure residents understand what we are able to consult on and what they are able to actually affect. That is not necessarily what the communities want to be commenting on, but that is the process that we are within as a company.

The value that I believe consultation can bring is enormous to big projects. It can bring a uniqueness, it can make it part of the local fabric and it can really blur a boundary and can knit it into a wider community. There is an opportunity through the consultation and then the delivery process and ultimately the lived project eventually in that by engaging people at the right time and doing really meaningful engagement, you can blur boundaries and get people involved and make it an integral part of the wider neighbourhood.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): It is a difficult balance to strike, is it not, really, with expectation management? You used an interesting phrase earlier about what you can consult on and what you cannot because a lot of people misinterpret consultation as referenda. They think that they have a right of veto and then think, "Well, you will just go ahead anyway and ignore us". What can you do to soften that?

Ciron Edwards (Associate Director, Soundings): What we have to do is recognise that that is what people want. Those opinions are still valid. We need to record them and reflect them. We need to make sure people understand the limits of what we are able to or they are able to affect. Essentially, it is coming from an informed point of view. I am not saying that consultation is a communications exercise, but the only way true

consultation can happen is if people fully understand the whole parameters around the project, understand their role within it and also understand those decisions that have been made and [they] are unable to change.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): You agree, then, with Cath [Shaw] that initially it is an information exercise? You are communicating what the intention is and then, as the consultation process moves along, it becomes a bit more dynamic and things start to change in response to the consultation.

Ciron Edwards (Associate Director, Soundings): I would not say that. There are parallel processes. It is a discussion. On some of the projects that I am working on at the moment, we are spending a lot of time before we go out to consultation to make sure we have the many answers that the residents will be asking for in place so that they have a reference and a central point and can learn and understand so that they are able to engage with the process we are setting up. They are in parallel; they are not one after the other. It is true that it is a dynamic process. It has to be. It has to be to a certain extent reactive. Things will crop up and that is the beauty of that as a process. People will suddenly become more and more engaged. Things will change. Ideas will shift. The whole thing will continue to develop. That is the whole point of a designed development process.

Len Duvall AM: In general terms, maybe using some of your issues. Are some of the problems with the public about how there is consultation during the planning process on some of the details - and there is confusion in local government as well - and then there is genuine consultation at the beginning of a project that usually leads to a planning process? Let us be honest. Tell me about some of the thinking in local government. You do not go out with a blank sheet to the public and those original issues. Describe the process of the consultation prior to getting into the planning process or is it straight into, "This is a planning-type exercise and this is what we have"? You have the retailers wanting to refresh and revive their offer, presumably, and you have some allied housing issues and some wider issues in the area. They come together. Is that how it works? How does it work?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): I cannot answer that one specifically on Brent Cross because it was ten-plus years ago that the process started. However, in general terms, that question of how fully formed your ideas are before you talk to people is one of the absolutely hardest things to get right. I do not know if Ciron [Edwards] would agree, but if you go to people with a completely blank sheet of paper you tend to get a bit of a reaction of, "Why are you talking to us?" Equally, if your ideas are too fully formed, you get an understandable cynicism, "Why are you talking to us if you have already made your mind up?" Getting that balance right early is a bit of an art form.

Also, whatever happens, you have to go into it at a point where you are still willing to change your mind because there is no point, really. The only thing you achieve if you go into this situation when all the I's are dotted and T's are crossed is to irritate people because you have asked them and then you do not have the room to manoeuvre to take account of what they said.

What you need to do is understand the constraints around a scheme and understand what people are likely to be concerned about because you do not go into the area not knowing it at all. The views of elected ward councillors, for example, can be very informative. You go in with a sense of the constraints, a sense of what you are trying to achieve and maybe some outline ideas but not so fully baked that you cannot then change them in response to what people say back to you.

We have some recent examples where we perhaps did not do it as textbook as we would like. Because they were very small schemes with a small number of houses, we went straight to the planning consultation and

people raised concerns, for example, about a particular oak tree that they were locally very attached to. We withdrew the planning applications, changed the scheme so that they could preserve that particular oak tree and then went back to planning. Perhaps it would have been better in that situation to go through a pre-planning consultation, but even when we got to the formal point we were able to react to what the community wanted.

Len Duvall AM: I suppose my last point is something you have alluded to in your first statement as well as what you have just mentioned now. Ten years on, of course things change. Once we get into a planning consultation, things change. What is the general thinking about how you keep people continually in the loop about some of those judgements that only probably you and potential partners are going to be doing? Barring major recession, we know things change. In terms of schemes over that ten years, does the public influence it or does other thinking influence it or do other issues, maybe the GLA coming on board and understanding what you are trying to do, influence it? How do we communicate that back to the public and what should we be looking for in terms of your experience?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): It is a good question over the very long term. We tend to find that there are a smaller group of engaged residents whom we try to use as a conduit to the wider community. All of our estate regeneration schemes have partnership boards with a number - it varies depending on the size of the scheme - of local residents and that acts as a conduit.

Obviously, we have social media, particularly websites but also other social media. If I am honest, we are really in the early days of being as smart as we can be about using social media. Hopefully, through the Brent Cross South scheme we will be able to use it to its full effect. On some of our estate regenerations we have not quite worked out the most effective way to use it, but that is certainly one channel that is going to be very important.

The other thing that I perhaps have not said that is very important is about understanding why residents have given the feedback they have so that you can understand. If you cannot do exactly what they have asked for, you can either get close enough or explain how you have attempted to meet their desires in a different way if you have gone into that process of understanding why. "You do not like this block here and you do not like losing the green space there. What is it about that green space?" That gives you a better chance of being able to explain how the changes you have made over time have as far as possible remained true to what you have said you are trying to achieve and what the residents have asked you to achieve.

Len Duvall AM: OK. I suppose, Chairman, before I go into the more formal question, can I just ask about one more issue about, just generally, young people being involved in some of these discussions about their area and location? Of course, if you engage with them, you will get some interesting responses from their perception of what they would like to see. I suppose it is a bit of a bugbear for me and it is an issue for me. We forget the 'planning for real' exercises in some senses and some of the old stuff that the old Greater London Council did on engagement with people about their neighbourhoods and areas.

In terms of your experience, have you ever been involved in engagement with - and maybe they should be part of the formal process - young people being involved in something crucial happening in their area as significant as this scheme? It is a big scheme, is it not?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): It is a really good point. In the Council, we look quite closely at our Residents' Perception Survey. My colleague, the

Director of Children's Services, is always very keen to call it the 'Adult Residents' Perception Survey' because, as he points out, it is through that mechanism surveying a proportion of the population that is over 18 and it is really important that we understand the views of younger people.

In the case of Brent Cross South, when we were selecting Argent, we held a stakeholder day when all of the potential shortlisted developers presented to local stakeholders and we did include in that the head boy and head girl of the Whitefield Secondary School. The feedback from all four potential development partners was that they found it very useful to have those people in the room. There is a danger that that sounds a bit tokenistic and it is not meant to be. That was one particular event where we were able to include the school. I have been in Barnet only since 2013. I would not say that I have yet been involved in one that is best practice in terms of a place-based scheme. When I look at what Argent did at King's Cross, there is a lot that we can learn there. It was certainly very keen to involve young people.

The schools give us a fantastic opportunity. I have been involved in the rebuild of a school where the pupils in the school were very heavily involved in the process of going through the design and specification of the new school. That probably was best practice. That was in a previous role in Harlow. The schools give us a route into that wider conversation. Certainly, it is something that we will want to work with Argent on and we can learn a lot from what it did at King's Cross.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair) (Deputy Chair): From my experience, I do fully appreciate the significant constraints that a planning application or project has in terms of, say, viability and those kinds of issues. However, should the consultation process actually be used as a tool to shape what the local communities expect from the local development and, therefore, should it be really something that does actually reflect when it is developed what the local vision is from the community's perspective, whether it is social infrastructure or the other amenities that they want to have? This is something that we fail to get during the process whether it is an Area Action Plan or dealing with planning applications, Brent Cross Cricklewood being one of the key examples, from my experience.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): I agree that it is certainly a hugely important factor: the views of the existing resident community. As you say, it is only one factor alongside designing a scheme that is actually deliverable and, of course, having regard to the needs of the people who do not live there yet and are going to be in the new community, who also will have a view that is important, although obviously difficult to get hold of because they are not there yet. Yes, I would absolutely agree that the neighbouring communities and their views are a huge part of the thinking - as you say, not the only part - and I am sure that there is always room for improvement. I am sure that we can always learn from each scheme and do the next one better, yes.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair) (Deputy Chair): If I can be very specific, almost like ten years on for the Brent Cross Cricklewood scheme, which is evolving and changing and so on, given that situation, do you have plans for a meaningful consultation with the local stakeholders and community so that they do have that ability to shape it both for their existing community and for future communities?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): Yes. Certainly, as I said, one of the criteria that we selected Argent Related on was its very positive attitude to engaging with the local community. It is certainly our intention to go through that process. I cannot give you very specific and detailed plans at this stage because we are in the process of working those up with the joint venture partner but, yes, certainly that was one of the key factors in selecting Argent Related. I hope that

when other colleagues and residents get to speak, perhaps they will not be equally glowing but hopefully they have seen that Argent is very committed.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair) (Deputy Chair): Thank you very much.

Andrew Dismore AM: Do you think that trust is important in this process between the Council and residents?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): Certainly trust is what we always aspire to, absolutely, not just in the context of regeneration schemes but in everything the Council does. We need to treat it as a very important and valued thing and it is very easily to lose it if you inadvertently do not follow up on something you have said you would do. It is a very fragile thing and a very important thing. I hope that by continuing to try hard and continuing to do our best and people seeing us doing our best, we will be able to sustain that trust, yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: Do you think residents trust you now on these regeneration schemes?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): There are a wide range of views. There are certainly some residents who do not. There are some residents who are more positive. The initial conversations that we have had on the south side since we have had Argent on board have been encouraging. There are some other sensitive regeneration schemes in the borough that you are very aware of, of course, where it would be true to say that not all of the residents do trust us and some people are looking at those and raising questions. However, we have made a pretty decent go of it in the last year and I hope we continue to build that trust.

Andrew Dismore AM: Obviously, you were talking about West Hendon at the moment as an example?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): As one example, yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: It was one example that you mentioned earlier on. To my mind, that significantly undermined trust in the way the Council approaches these things. Following up some of the things that Len [Duvall AM] was saying, one of the big issues with West Hendon was that the residents thought they were not being listened to at all in the process. If you go right back - it was probably before you were around but not before I was around - to the start of the West Hendon process, what we ended up with at the other end was completely different to what we were balloted on right at the very beginning. To my mind - and I think most residents would agree, bearing in mind the banners and protests and everything else that was described all over the estate - people were very much of the view that what was now being done to them, as they saw it, not for them, was nothing like what they originally agreed should happen to the estate.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): We have certainly learned a lot from West Hendon. We have also learned a lot from estates like Dollis Valley where we have been much more successful in keeping residents involved and engaged. It is probably fair to say that Brent Cross is a slightly different proposition because we do have 200 or so residents of the Whitefield Estate for whom this is obviously very significant because we are looking at knocking their houses down and when you are dealing with people and knocking their houses down you can never forget that you are talking about their homes. That is the number one cardinal rule. With Brent Cross, the reprovioning of the Whitefield Estate is huge for those people but is a relatively small part of a much bigger scheme. Therefore, it is a

different kind of consultation and a different kind of engagement on Brent Cross than it was with the estate regeneration.

Andrew Dismore AM: At West Hendon you were knocking everyone's houses down as well. One of the issues that was raised there was re-provision for the people who lived on the estate. Originally they promised that everybody who was on the estate would be able to stay there and that is clearly not what has happened, particularly for non-secure tenants. There are hundreds of hundreds of them and now they are all at Grahame Park and they are going to be shifted off Grahame Park to who knows where. When you say that the people who are in social housing now will be able to continue in social housing, that is not quite right, is it?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): For the Whitefield Estate, absolutely. The planning consent envisages re-provision of all 215 units. Yes, I am confident that everybody on the Whitefield Estate will be able to be rehoused in the new scheme.

Andrew Dismore AM: Will the leaseholders be able to stay?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): There will be a shared equity scheme.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): We are getting bit granular here. I appreciate why and I understand why you might want to do that, but we are going to have to curtail this line of questioning a little bit.

Len Duvall AM: My question is to Debbie Jackson. Really, it is about the GLA's approach to issues around consultation. Does the GLA Regeneration Team require organisations bidding for High Street Funding to show that they have engaged the public? What do we ask to see and how do we test that, if we do?

Debbie Jackson (Assistant Director - Regeneration, GLA): As you know - and I have talked to you about a number of our funds before - a general principle across all of our funds is that we require our bidders to demonstrate engagement with the local community. I have written down here a 'continuum of involvement', if you like, from information through to consultation through to engagement through to involvement. What we look for through the Regeneration Fund is more on the right-hand side as I have written it down towards engagement and involvement because we are not really in planning territory for a lot of our schemes, although we are for bits of them, and it usually tends to be more about regeneration schemes delivering outcomes for local communities, which almost by definition have failed if local communities are not involved in them. Therefore, both in terms of the rolling out of those schemes and in terms of the outcomes that they look to deliver, we are looking for things that are very involved with the local community.

To give you a couple of examples, the Peckham Station Square project, which is one that will go to planning shortly, has been designed through a co-design process. We listened together with the local authority there and delayed the delivery of that project - which in other meetings you might shout at me for - and listened to the local people because they asked us to slow down. They wanted to spend more time working on the design together with the architect and that is what we did. There is a co-design process that has taken place and that is going in for planning shortly. Then the formal consultation will kick in, but the formal consultation is almost academic, hopefully, given the level of involvement that has taken place so far, although it is obviously a right and proper part of the process.

Another example of the kinds of things that we promote is creative and involved consultation with the communities and culture and art projects in particular can be very useful tools. It is interesting to hear the

discussion around involving young people. We are very interested in tactics that can include people who may not respond to what are perceived to be more traditional ways of public sector consultation. There are a couple of examples of things that we have done there. Going back to the High Street 2012 project in Tower Hamlets and the Altab Ali Park, the borough worked with the Museum of London, a local construction college and Bangladeshi street artists to arrive at an appropriately inclusive design there. Again, involving groups that are not always the most obvious groups can maybe catch people's attention in a way that would not necessarily always be the case. In Croydon, we used a vacant retail unit in Southend in Croydon for a Southend Ideas Shop and used local construction students - again, trying to get young people engaged - as a focus for community consultation. This led to a pattern designed by a local artist that was screen-printed by local youths onto hoardings and tiles. I have the luxury because we are in Regeneration of doing this more creatively. I guess one of my observations about the discussion that has just taken place is that for a project as mega as Brent Cross or King's Cross or any of these, there should be a whole variety of methods in place at any given time that cut across that spectrum I described of information giving, consultation, engagement and involvement. There are opportunities to do that across these large projects over a period of time. Hopefully, through our work in the Regeneration team, we are demonstrating some tactics that can be used to bring people into a project who may not normally be engaged.

Len Duvall AM: OK. In that sense, there is almost a plan to take on this work further, is there not, within the GLA? I know you cannot answer for other people, but in the Housing and Land Department, are there people similar to you with your thinking and the approach that goes on, rather than doubling your colleagues? Tell us what the crossover is. If I was doing a housing regeneration scheme, would it be the same? God forbid we do not give them any more subsidies on housing or we do but it is small. Is there similar thinking about that or does the GLA need to think corporately about some of this work?

Debbie Jackson (Assistant Director - Regeneration, GLA): You are asking me to talk about areas that are not my responsibility. There is similar thinking. We do work on a small number of select projects very closely with our Housing colleagues and we do share the same values in terms of involvement of local communities. Indeed, it is not usually the GLA that is doing this consulting. It is usually the local authorities. Through our fund-giving, we have the ability to encourage them to work in a certain way. Indeed, Housing has the ability to do that as well. Therefore, in the places that we are working with our Housing colleagues, we share the same values. Clearly, going back to my point, there is a valid place for consultation in the more classic and traditional sense of the word and information giving, but what we will always push for internally within the GLA and with our local authority partners is some of the more creative engagement and involvement.

Len Duvall AM: OK. Is the plan, then, to use the public engagement as a metric for looking at the social impact of the GLA's work? Do you do it like that?

Debbie Jackson (Assistant Director - Regeneration, GLA): For our funded programmes, we measure engagement in terms of things like the number of events held. As you know from when I have spoken to you before about our programmes, we have an almost infinite number - we are trying to reduce them - of output measures. Something that we would measure success on is the number of people engaged: the number of people coming to events, the number of people participating in the activities that are delivered through our funds. Indeed, there is quite a lot of survey work that takes place in town centres as well, which is obviously another way to involve people. It is something that we are very keen to develop. Obviously, I cannot speak for the direction that we will take under the new mayoralty, but we are very keen to continue to promote and also think about how we can use digital platforms. I will not do it now, but hopefully at some point I will get the opportunity to talk to you a little bit more about some of our work there as well.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you.

James Cleverly AM MP: Ciron, I will start with you. When it comes to public consultations, Cath [Shaw] has already mentioned that there are a number of methods, exploring social media and that kind of stuff. How do you go about assessing what would be the most appropriate and effective format for public consultation?

Ciron Edwards (Associate Director, Soundings): It is quite simple. The most effective is face-to-face communication, simply getting out there, going out and meeting groups on their own perch, walking the streets, door-knocking or whatever it might be. Actually getting out there and seeing people face-to-face and talking to them is by far and away the most effective and is what people generally prefer. That does not mean that you should ignore the other methods and they are absolutely vital as well, but face-to-face is the crux of what our work is: bringing people together in workshop formats, visiting tenants and residents association meetings, taking people out, going for walks around the area, being led by local residents or whatever it might be. It is that one-to-one interaction that is absolutely vital. It helps to build – I would not say ‘trust’ – a relationship with those people that you can take forward and build on over the years to come with some of these longer projects. It helps to break down those barriers. It helps to really create a productive environment for people to share the information and to talk. Social media has its place, but it should never replace that first and fundamental face-to-face interaction.

James Cleverly AM MP: I would like to bring Pat [Turnbull] and Pauline [McKinnell] in at this point to get a view perhaps the other end of the telescope. Pat, perhaps you first. Could you talk through what you view as the most effective or any examples of where you have seen something work really well and what lessons can be drawn from that?

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): First of all, I want to say that I am representing Just Space, which is a network of community organisations, most of which are very concerned about many of the developments that are taking place in London at the moment.

You spoke about face-to-face communication and I saw a very good example of what can go wrong with face-to-face communication on the television the other day. A reporter went up to a young man and asked him, “Do you think we should knock down this housing estate?” The young man eagerly answered, “Yes”. If the young man had known as the inhabitants of the Heygate Estate did not know in 1999 that after 12 years they would all be removed from the estate and would be scattered to the four winds and their homes replaced by four times as many homes that the young man and his family could not afford to live in, then his answer might have been a different one.

This highlights one of the problems with consultation. If people are not properly informed about the likely outcomes of what is just about to happen to them, then they are not going to give an answer that in their own interests. To me, that is the most important thing: what is in the interests of a majority of the people of London? You have in your papers the example of the Whitefield Estate here, where some people answered questions not even knowing that a bridge would come at the cost of demolishing the Whitefield Estate. It is now that that is happening. That is not in the past. It is happening all the time.

Then the other problem is that obviously behind the reporter’s question there was an agenda and the agenda was a push to remove council housing and social rented housing, which is going on all over London. If consultation is a kind of fig-leaf and a cover-up and a collection of numbers that you are supposed to have

consulted on, which is actually just to push through the plans of a developer or even, sadly, a local council, then it is not going to meet the real needs of the people who are allegedly being consulted.

The most important point from the point of view of me and the Just Space people is what is going to result in a better life for most Londoners. That is really what should be the aim of consultation, but the sort of consultation we often see – and I have experienced it myself – is not that kind of consultation.

James Cleverly AM MP: What would you suggest to improve it? You have made it clear that you are concerned with some of the forms of consultation that we are currently using. What do you feel would give the best chance of genuinely getting local people's views on projects?

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): You have to start off with a project that is actually going to be in their interests in order to make the whole process worthwhile for them. If your project is not going to be, then all the rest of it is just a cover-up. What can I say?

May I, if you do not mind, read out comments from a Brent Terrace resident, who has not been invited to the Committee but who would like her views to be known on the --

James Cleverly AM MP: Is it in relation to the question that I asked because I do ...

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): It is, actually. It is about consultation.

James Cleverly AM MP: OK.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): Could I do that? By the way, it might be a good idea if the London Assembly had a proper review of this development that we are talking about with more representatives of the local community present to give you a wider range of opinions on it. This resident is a Brent Terrace resident living in the middle of this development that we are talking about, the Brent Cross Cricklewood development, and she says:

"The London Communications Agency involvement that I saw over a period of time was as follows, in brief. They sent out a press release that completely misrepresented the composition of the group opposing Brent Cross, saying that it was organised by those with vested business interests. When conducting market research by phone, they misrepresented themselves so that no one had any idea who had contacted them. They asked leading questions during the phone call [leading questions like the example I gave you at the very start]. When conducting market research in Brent Cross Shopping Centre, they again asked leading questions to which most people would agree that the regeneration was positive. Leading survey questions is not only poor survey design but skews the responses, so I and others complained about these leading questions. The London Communications Agency then conducted further market research and using leading questions. I think a complaint about LCA went to the organisation that deals with internet privacy because, when dealing with the feedback from the market research, they shared the email addresses of all those who had responded."

That is an example from this very development we are talking about of what should not be happening and it obviously is.

James Cleverly AM MP: Thank you. Pauline, if I could turn to you, again, what I am hoping to get is an idea of what consultation methods you have felt have been most effective and I suppose, to be fair, which ones you

feel have been least effective. Pat [Turnbull] has highlighted some of the concerns that she has had about that, but could I get from you what lessons could be learned? What could become good practice?

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): I have been involved since 2006 and so that goes back to when they first presented the plans. It really was a huge shock in the community because the previous plans had been to develop the railway sidings and involved about 1,300 homes. Then we went to these exhibitions in 2006 and 2007 and it was completely different. I am not aware that anybody had any discussions with the people who lived in the community at all and now they were going to knock down the Whitefield Estate, which was a complete shock. People were in tears at the exhibitions when they saw this. They were going to build on green spaces. There were going to be 7,500 homes. We were then invited to make our comments, which we did, but nothing changed. When the planning application came forward, we were hoping that they were not going to knock down 200 homes on the estate or that they would modify some of the things. Nothing was modified at all, as far as we are aware. As far as the Forum and the people whom I know - and I lived in this area for 30-odd years - there were no discussions until the actual planning application was passed. Then the developer and the developer's representatives started coming to speak to us. With this huge scheme, we did not feel we had any input until it was all passed.

Now, obviously, we are hoping to improve small parts of it like the Farm Project and to keep the farm buildings and maybe to get some modifications as well to the Millennium Green, but the Millennium Green trustees were not aware that that was going to be built on or that they were going to take part of it away or that they were going to put a tall block of flats right at the end so that you completely change the whole thing. In the past, it was all completely done wrong, but maybe because they did not feel that they would get it through if they consulted us because an estate is not going to want to be knocked down, which has been set.

Also, there was something that, Cath [Shaw], said about understanding. We did not feel that anyone explained to us - in ways that we could understand, anyway - why the Whitefield Estate has to be knocked down. I still do not understand why a small estate, really, of about 200 homes has to be knocked down and why they cannot develop whatever they want to develop around it. I have met with the Soundings people already and there is a hope now that things are going to be far better with the fact that they are going to meet quite a lot of individuals one-to-one as well as just public meetings. However, the main plans have all been passed. That is the feeling of the Forum.

James Cleverly AM MP: Cath, you have had a fairly unambiguous bit of feedback there at least from the guests we have here today with their view about how consultations are not meeting their expectations of what consultations should do. How much of that do you think is a miscommunication of the function of the consultations? How much of it is a flaw in the methodology of the consultations? Finally, do you feel that there is a proper understanding in terms of both the consultees and the organisations running the consultations about what really the consultation is there to do?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): It is very difficult to comment on what happened in 2006 and I can only take Pauline's [McKinnell] word for it, but of course as well as the informal consultation that took place there would have been formal consultation through the planning process and the planning committee that took the decision would have listened very carefully to that consultation when taking the formal decision to agree the scheme. I cannot really comment on that from ten years ago.

I should perhaps pick up on some of the comments that Pat [Turnbull] made. There were some quite significant and anonymous allegations against the London Communications Agency there and of course they

are not here to speak for themselves. It is certainly not something that I recognise from having worked with it. If you want to give me some specific details outside, I am very happy to follow it up with them because, of course, that is not an approach that we would want to see taken¹.

Going forward, absolutely, as Ciron [Edwards] said earlier, the key is to be very clear about what can change, what cannot change, what you are asking people about and what you are not asking people about and, as you said, to understand what they want to achieve, what they want to see happen and why that is important to them so that if you cannot deliver it in exactly the form they request you can get as close as possible.

It is important to remember that there is a very significant pressure for housing in London. Yes, absolutely, as I have said in previous answers, the views of the existing residents are extremely important, but there is also a community of people who will be there in the future and are not there now and who, one presumes, have a need for housing. There are many people in London with a need for housing and we need somehow to be reflecting the interests of those people in housing need who cannot at that particular point be represented because they do not live there yet. Those views also need to be taken into account.

James Cleverly AM MP: One of the things that came across – Pauline [McKinnell] said it explicitly and it was implied in some of Pat’s [Turnbull] comments – was that there is a feeling about the strategic thinking, as Pauline was saying, with regard to residents saying, “I do not understand why. Why does it have to be developed like this? Why does it have to be knocked down? Why does it go from just developing the sidings to developing the whole site?”

It did strike me that these unanswered questions lead me to believe that if the consultation just sits at the discrete ultra-local level but does not have a mechanism to explain what the broader picture is – and you hinted at that at the tail end of your previous answer – then you are automatically or inevitably going to come up against friction. How do you think that could be improved?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director – Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): It is possibly, yes, a fair comment that we need to put local consultations into a wider context. In our Residents’ Perception Survey, at the moment affordability of housing is the number one concern raised by adult residents that is facing Barnet at the moment. Perhaps we need to put consultation in that context.

It comes back to being very clear about what we are trying to achieve through the scheme and why those goals are important to us at the same time as trying to understand what local residents want to improve with the scheme and why their goals are important to them.

Andrew Dismore AM: One of the points to put to Pauline, if I could just have that exchange, is going back to your earlier exchange. You said that you did not see anything change as a result of what went on. That is a general complaint that I have picked up on all of these regeneration schemes in Barnet. Indeed, in West Hendon they talk about ‘redevelopment’ rather than ‘regeneration’. Do you think that it actually is consultation or just information and telling what is happening rather than genuinely engaging?

¹ Following the meeting, Cath Shaw, Commissioning Director, Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet, contacted the London Communications Agency with regard to the allegations pertaining to leading questions and provided the following statement from the London Communications Agency: “For the record there was a survey which we commissioned from Comres (we [the LCA] did not do it – it was a proper market research company) which one resident (from the coalition) complained about to the Market Research Society. The Market Research Society looked into it as they are duty bound to do and they dismissed the complaint fully.”

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): No, I did not think that they engaged with us at all until it was passed, basically. Then they did meet with people individually, but before that it was just going along, seeing these exhibitions and putting in our comments. Then, when it came to the planning committee, there were quite a lot of people who has asked to speak against and that was it, really. There was the information and there was us and we were objecting and --

Andrew Dismore AM: Nothing changed? Is that the point?

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): No, nothing changed between 2006 and when the plan came before the committee in 2009. I am not aware that anything had changed at that stage.

Andrew Dismore AM: One of the key things that has come up, in my view, from all of these different regenerations is that those who live on the estate should be able to stay on the estate. That seems to be the bottom line that most people want.

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: I am not quite sure what the position presently is on the Brent Cross one. Certainly in West Hendon that was originally promised and is not what has happened.

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): I thought the short-term housing tenants are not being re-housed and the people who own them are going to.

Andrew Dismore AM: There is also an issue about leaseholders that we will come to and we can talk about compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) shortly.

Last week I went to see the Bacton Low Rise regeneration in Camden and there everybody seems to be happy because everybody is going to be allowed to stay on the estate who wants to stay on the estate on the basis of similar tenancies and the design has changed as a result of what people have had to say. It can work if there is a political - with a small 'P'; I do not mean party political - will to engage. Do you think that that is right?

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): I do not know the estate you are talking about, but there are a couple of estates in Hackney, which is where I come from, that are undergoing big redevelopments. There are a couple of common problems with these.

One is the extension of the redevelopment work from what appeared at first to be very short-term and something that was going to take a few years to something that is going to now run from 1999 to 2032. That is a large chunk of somebody's life and some of the residents are going to be sitting in those estates for that entire period with very little being done to improve their housing conditions. At the same time, unfortunately, they are going to see tall buildings entirely for private sale going up right next to where they live on the site. That is the case at Woodberry Down. That is the case in the Colville Estate.

The problem with that is as well that you can talk theoretically about people having the right to return, but the thing is prolonged over so many years. What does that actually mean in practice? Then there are cases of people, for example, in the Woodberry Down estate who have had to move three or four times already and are still in old, inadequate housing.

You said that there is a very significant need for housing in London. The very significant need is for housing that Londoners can afford. The kind of housing that is being knocked down is exactly that, I am afraid, and it is not being replaced like-for-like. That is the great difficulty.

Andrew Dismore AM: Cath, am I right in saying that Barnet is going to lose 900 social homes out of all the regeneration schemes? Is that right?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): The estate regeneration schemes, yes. It is a slightly lower number. It is 800 and something. Of course, we have huge growth on other sites in our Opportunity Areas at Millbrook Park, Colindale and Brent Cross. The net increase in Affordable Rent and in affordable products is quite significant.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes, but that is not social. Can I go on and perhaps point to you, Cath? There is this distinction between the formal process and the informal pre-app consultation. Do you think that the sorts of objections that Pauline [McKinnell] has been talking about and that we have discussed on other estates actually feed through properly into the formal planning process? Do you think that people are able to engage with the formal planning process in terms of putting objections in and feeling that those objections have been listened to?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): It is absolutely right that the most effective engagement is before you hit the formal planning process because, pretty much by definition, at the point when you put in a planning application, you have made a decision about what you want to deliver. The kind of work that Soundings is doing early is the most important work for shaping the scheme and the proposals.

Of course, we do our best to make sure that the planning process is one that is accessible to people. I know that the London Communications Agency has 34,000 addresses on its circulation list for information about Brent Cross and there are a very significant number of people who are receiving that information. In terms of the local planning authority, we try to make sure that it is a very accessible process and we have an agreed statement of community involvement for those planning applications.

Inevitably, some people will find the formal planning process intimidating. It is not the easiest to engage in if you are not used to engaging with bureaucracies. Therefore, the early consultation of the kind that Soundings does where you are out and about meeting people in their own environments and perhaps at their own events is always going to be more effective.

Andrew Dismore AM: That is the point, is it not? Pauline's [McKinnell] argument is, "All of these pre-application discussions are fine but nothing changed". That is the point. You are talking about consultation. I went to Pauline and what she was talking about was information dissemination. Do you see a distinction between the two?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): I do and, as I have said, I do not feel sufficiently well cited on what happened ten years ago to comment on whether that is a fair reflection or not.

Andrew Dismore AM: I will not push that further, but I would tend to agree with what Pauline had to say. I have been around a bit longer than you have in the area.

Can I go on and ask Pauline? We have covered some of the ground that I was going to ask you about already, but I wanted to just come to the CPO system. The CPO system is pretty important particularly for leaseholders, which I was asking about earlier on. It is important. Do you think that there has been enough public engagement around the CPO system?

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): No, partly because of the meetings that the Forum has put on. When the Whitefield Estate residents have come forward, they have been very angry, I suppose, and so then there cannot have been proper explanations to them about it.

There was a point that I did want to pick up. It is not exactly the leaseholders but the tenants. They are told that they will be rehoused. As I said, I do not know about the short-term but the assured, etc, will be rehoused on the estate and they will get like-for-like. That is accepted. However, when someone came from Barnet Homes to go through the needs, they then told this person that it was not going to be like-for-like and she was not going to have two bedrooms anymore but she would have one. She was so upset for days on end. This person, I am sure, was saying what he thought was right but it was not right.

It is this sort of breakdown in communication all the time, which has gone on in the past. I accept from what Cath [Shaw] says that she is hoping - and she has only, as I picked up, been there from 2013 - that this is going to improve and I really hope that it is going to improve.

Andrew Dismore AM: It seems me that the bottom line is that people should be allowed, if they want to, to stay on the estate with the same form of tenure like-for-like --

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): Yes, that was accepted.

Andrew Dismore AM: -- and, picking up Pat's [Turnbull] point, earlier on moves if that is possibly achievable. It can be with the right sort of planning, as I saw in Camden last week. If I pick up the point that you just made, the position is that those who are secure tenants are going to be rehoused on the estate --

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: -- one way or another and unsecured tenants have no rights at all. One of the real problems that has developed is the increasing growth in unsecured tenants, who are used as pawns in the process.

Going back to the CPO process, one of the issues that arises out of the CPO process - and you can tell me if you disagree - is that the amount of money that people are offered under the CPO system, even with the additional compensation arrangements, is nowhere near enough to re-provide for themselves on the new estate and so they are having to move out. Is that the position at Whitefield, do you think?

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): They are being owned part-equity, are they not, and shared ownership?

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): Yes.

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): They have been told all along - the leaseholders and the freeholders - that they will not be able to afford any of the new houses that are being built or flats that are being built. I am not quite sure whether they can actually say that because some of these

houses and flats people have put in a lot of improvements and really nice improvements too. How can they know what the value of those flats are or the value of those houses because it is going to be an independent valuation?

Andrew Dismore AM: There is an independent valuation and then if it is not agreed it goes to a CPO inquiry. The problem with a CPO inquiry, if we take the West Hendon example, is that the Council and the developers are represented by Queen's Counsels (QCs) and the tenants represent themselves.

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: I know that when I gave evidence on West Hendon, I was on my own, as it were, and I am a lawyer; it is quite an intimidating process with a QC cross-examining you, which makes it very difficult to get the point over. Presumably, you will face the same with Whitefield.

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): Yes, I am sure that is right. It is coming up perhaps in May.

Andrew Dismore AM: The question is the valuation. The Council might be able to help us on the valuations; I do not know if you can help on this. Certainly on the West Hendon one, the amounts that were being offered were about half of what they would need to buy a new property on the estate. What about Brent Cross?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): The first thing to say is that a CPO is absolutely the last resort and we always try to reach an informal agreement by negotiation with any landowner, whether a resident or a commercial operator. The valuations are done independently by a qualified surveyor. You are right. Obviously, you cannot be very specific and say, "You will never be able to afford something on the estate", because you do not know people's own personal circumstances.

What is not surprising in the case of West Hendon is that properties built in the late 1960s with fairly short-term construction methods - they were not made of bricks; they were made of a different construction method - are very likely to be worth substantially less than brand-new modern flats. It should not come as an enormous surprise to anybody that those flats are worth less than the new flats. What we try very hard to do is to make sure that if you own, for the sake of argument, £150,000 worth of the flat that you live in to start with, at the end of the process you have a flat on the estate that you can live in and you own £150,000 worth of equity. You are then in a much better position because, whereas the original flat will not be keeping up with market growth, the new flat certainly will and so the chances of your share of equity growing are greater. You end up with a nicer place to live in and the same amount of investment in the property.

Andrew Dismore AM: That is seeing a property as an investment rather than as somewhere to live in.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): Yes, but you end up with somewhere to live as well.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes, but I will kick it back to West Hendon because that is fairly well a finished deal, as it were, as opposed to the one here, which is under negotiation and has the same issues arising. There, people owned their homes outright with no equity and then suddenly found themselves having to get another mortgage, ending up in shared equity and paying rent, which they were not having to pay before, or whatever.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): You do not pay rent on your half of the property. Sorry, can I just correct that? That is a very common misperception and it does not help residents making a decision that that misperception is perpetuated.

In a shared ownership scheme, which is a low-cost home ownership product that the GLA supports through its Affordable Homes Programme, if you buy, for example, 50%, you then pay rent on the remaining 50%. That is shared ownership and that is a common submarket product.

The offer that we give to residents of regeneration estates is shared equity, where they are able to buy the proportion of their home that they can afford. If your flat is valued at £200,000 and the new one is valued at £400,000, you will own half of it but you will not pay rent on the other half. Obviously, if you had a mortgage on the £200,000 property before, you are still going to need one on the new property. If you did not have one before, you will not need one on the new property. You should preserve your position. If you do see the home as an investment - and most people do not see their homes as an investment - then you do preserve your investment position and, most importantly, you have a new home on the estate that is of a higher standard, cheaper to run, more energy efficient and so on than the original one.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): Can I just interject there? Again, we are getting a bit granular. I understand completely why, but the point of the meeting is about the consultation element.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): Yes, of course. Sorry.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): What you have just said is very interesting from that perspective. Is it widely known? You have said that there is a common misconception in what Andrew said and you have just corrected it. How well do you put that message across or have you put that message across to the residents who will be impacted? I can completely understand why they would be vigorously opposed to what was being proposed if they believed what Andrew [Dismore AM] has said. You have just countered that very effectively. How was that dealt with in the consultation?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): We try very hard to make sure that it is clear and that we talk to people. It is not unfortunate that residents get their information from a wide range of sources. It is completely appropriate that they get their information from a wide range of sources. What is unfortunate is that there are sometimes people who are opposed to some aspects of the scheme for whom it is not unhelpful that misinformation persists. There are people out there who let misperceptions continue because it supports their opposition to the scheme. We try our very best to counter that but it is certainly something that we have seen.

Andrew Dismore AM: I was going to ask Pat next, developing on the answer that you gave earlier on, about whether you think local people are sufficiently aware of the costs and benefits of a development when they are asked by somebody to support it or not.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): I am still not quite clear about what the benefits actually are. I know that there are some local estates around our way that 30 years ago would have been regarded as hard-to-let estates where flats are being sold at the market rate. I can tell you that in Hackney that is a very high rate.

If the people who in good faith under the Right to Buy scheme bought their flats before they were actually scheduled for demolition had gone to sell those flats, they would have got the market rate for those flats.

Now they are being left with something that they have a part share in. What, for example, is the situation as regards passing it on to your children, which is something that a lot of people who have bought under Right to Buy did it for? You said on the shared ownership that it was buy 50% and rent 50%. Very rarely that share of ownership is 25% at the maximum and it never gets bigger.

I still do not feel fully informed about this situation as regards the leaseholders on these estates at all.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): You can. There is succession. There is one right of succession and so you can pass it on to your children.

I do not know how granular you want to get again. I am very happy to let you have more information about how our shared equity schemes work. I assume they are broadly similar to the way they operate in Hackney, but of course I cannot speak for Hackney Council.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): Does it raise a wider point, though, that perhaps Barnet Council has missed a trick in terms of how it is communicating because there is this misconception out there? I do take your point and I think you are probably right that there are some people who will allow misunderstandings to circulate because it suits their personal views. Should Barnet be doing more to counter that if that view is taking hold?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): As I said, we try to deal directly with individuals. The numbers of leaseholders in these schemes are not huge. It is a small enough group of people that we can deal directly with them. It is almost inevitable that the answer to your question is, "Yes, we should do more", because if the misperception persists, then we have an obligation to do more to try to tackle it.

We can certainly look at whether enough information is being provided to the Whitefield residents in the right kind of way to make sure that they are aware of how the scheme will operate. I am quite happy to take that away as an action.

Yes, generally, if people do not understand the scheme, then we have an obligation to give them more information or support to make sure they do. We do in all of our schemes appoint an independent resident adviser and make sure that they have all of that information so that if people talk to them they can get accurate information. We can do more.

Andrew Dismore AM: A lot comes back to what we were talking about at the very beginning when I raised it with you, which was this question of trust. If residents have little trust in the Council, particularly if they feel their views have not been listened to in the planning process and in the preplanning process, then that makes the communication job that much harder after the event, does it not?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth & Development, London Borough of Barnet): It is certainly easier to talk to people who trust you than to people who do not, yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: Can I go back to the question I put to Pat, the more generic question, more broadly? Do you think people are made sufficiently aware of the downside when they are asked to decide whether to support these schemes or not? I mentioned the Camden one earlier on where it seemed to work quite well, from what I have learned from talking to tenants.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): No, I do not. I was part of a redevelopment scheme in the 1990s, which was a lot better than some of the schemes that are going on now because it was a relatively short process and it was all done – demolished and rebuilt – within about five or six years. However, at the start, councillors and other people came and persuaded them that the only option for our estate was to knock it down and rebuild it when, actually, they could have refurbished it. That would have preserved more homes and would have cost a great deal less pain to a lot of people. Some of the people on that estate also had to move two or three times.

The second thing they were told was that they would no longer be council tenants and that that would mean something: they would lose their secure tenancies, they would become assured tenants and now an assured tenant of a housing association, the rents would be higher and the service charges would be higher. None of that was actually said.

The third thing is that it was quite sad, really, what happened to some people. For example, there was a lady who was convinced that she was going to go up in the world because she was going to become a housing association tenant. It was quite clear that what was actually going to happen was that exactly the same people who had been on the estate before were going to be on the new estate plus some from other parts of the borough and other places. She was very disappointed. Not only that; she ended up with a flat much smaller than the one she had had before. All of these things were not clear and not explained before the whole redevelopment started.

That was on a relatively good redevelopment where all who wanted to return to the estate were able to return to the estate after about five or six years. The redevelopments now that carry on for 30 years are a very different kettle of fish and are much more painful. I can tell you that that was painful enough.

Andrew Dismore AM: Is part of the problem this? I do not know if you can comment on this and probably Cath [Shaw] as well. On the one hand, you have the macro picture, which is, “This is what we want to happen and this is our vision for the area”, which people can generally sign up to. However, when it comes down to looking at the individual’s details – the size of people’s flats, the tenure, the compensation arrangements and so forth – it is always after planning consent has been given and it is when the detail starts to be worked out to try to implement the macro picture. They find that the original promise of a wonderful place simply becomes difficult to deliver when they get into the so-called ‘viability assessments’.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): Yes. Viability assessments are a whole other issue. Yes, exactly.

Maybe I could just bring in another question, since we are talking about the macro picture. It is something else that is related to the development you are talking about that people in Just Space are very concerned about, which is the Opportunity Areas. This is an Opportunity Area. We have now become part in Hackney of an Opportunity Area, the City Fringe Opportunity Area, and people are very concerned about the lack of consultation in, first of all, determining the 38 Opportunity Areas that already exist in London. The plan for the City Fringe was published in December 2015. The consultation was in December 2014. It was not a consultation as in the normal planning setup. There was not a long process and an Examination in Public. There was really very little publicity about it at all. I just found out about it from a friend, who said it in a submission. I have no idea what they thought of the submission because there was no discussion about it.

The Opportunity Areas are said to be on brownfield sites. They are not. They are on sites where people live and people work already. The way the City Fringe Opportunity Area is described – and it is 109 pages – is as an adjunct to Tech City and the City itself. The only way in which the current inhabitants are described is as possible providers for the new, incoming richer people who are going to be in the area. That is the only way

they are described. There is one reference to our housing estates and they are described as if they are a nuisance because they are in the way of the further development northward of the City Fringe area.

That is just the Opportunity Area I know about. I know there are Opportunity Areas where there are great concerns from the people involved in their development. I would like to ask the GLA to make a proper study of the Opportunity Areas and to urge the Mayor not to appoint any more Opportunity Areas until a proper study has been made to find out the effects they have on the people who already live and work there, and whether they actually deliver on what they say they are going to deliver.

From what I can see, even though our Opportunity Area plan was published only in December, already the things in the plan are not being delivered. For example, it talks about co-working areas for people. There was a co-working area set up in 2013 in a place called the Trampery. Thirty fashion designers were in there. Now the rent has been increased 400% and they have all had to leave. As I say, some of the things that were in that plan, which was only published in December, are not achievable.

Andrew Dismore AM: What is the answer, then? A lot of the estates are old. They do need work doing to them. How do we go around it? You have the bigger picture. You then have the planning application and so forth. Then, to my mind, there should have been a re-ballot of the residents at the end.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): Re-consultation, not a re-ballot. It is not a referendum. It is a consultation.

Andrew Dismore AM: No. My argument was there should have been a re-ballot. There was a ballot to kick the thing off in the first place when people voted for it, and what they finally offered at the end of the process was not at all what they voted for in the beginning.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): Agreed.

Andrew Dismore AM: The only way to test that would be to have a re-ballot to see if people want what is now on offer. I do not know what you think about that.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): That is an excellent idea. The problem is that everything can be subverted, of course. The ballot should be genuine questions about the genuine situation and not some kind of flowery 'development' or description of it.

Since you [Ciron Edwards] are here from Soundings, there is a document being produced about the Soundings consultation on the Elephant and Castle estate and it raises a number of concerns about people spending hours and hours - years, in fact - being consulted, taking part in big meetings and being asked questions and so on, and at the end of it none of their points being taken into account at all. That is the sort of consultation that we really could do without. It is not consultation in any real sense, is it? It is a fig-leaf and a cover-up.

Andrew Dismore AM: It is information dissemination rather than information gathering and then acting on it.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): Yes, even very selective information exchange because people are only given a certain amount of information, the amount of information that the developers or whoever is paying for the consultation want them to have. In this case, Soundings was paid for by the developer.

Ciron Edwards (Associate Director, Soundings): The key point that that document raises is the loss of social rented on the Heygate Estate. It goes back to my earlier point in that when we were appointed, which was after most of these decisions - we were appointed by Lend Lease after the signing of the regeneration agreement with Southwark Council - they had made a commitment to the Council about a level of affordable housing that they were providing. It was not something we were to consult on. That was our brief.

I would say that the consultation was very much focused around the design of the new development. In that design - and I am sure Pat [Turnbull] will contradict me here - there were some significant changes made by the local residents to the consultation process around aspects such as partial retention of trees and so on. These are not the issues that really matter to people, but we recorded those issues when they were raised and we did reflect those in our documentation, which formed part of the planning application. We communicated those. We put the residents in front of the people who were the decision-makers on this project, whether it be the project director at the developer or senior members of the Council, who came down and spoke to the residents at these meetings. That connection between what the residents were feeling and what the residents wanted in the local community and the decision-makers was there. We created that. We facilitated that process.

Obviously I know that we have been taking some of the blame for this but we facilitated a process that we hoped would change things. On the aspects that we were asked to consult on, which were design aspects, I feel as though we did make some changes. The developer could have done more but we did make some changes that are being built out.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): What you are saying is that the parameters within which you were required to consult made a difference. It was more what you were asked to do, ie the parameters that you were set, that was at fault rather than the consultation itself?

Ciron Edwards (Associate Director, Soundings): Yes.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): That is a different story, really.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Andrew [Dismore AM] quite rightly brought up the issue about trust between a community, the planning authority and developers generally. We heard Pauline [McKinnell], who has given her experience from a Barnet resident's perspective. Brent residents who are on the edge of the Brent Cross development have had a similar experience.

Broadly speaking, there are three issues. There was a lack of meaningful consultation with Brent residents. There was also an issue about poor information to do with key aspects of the project given that this was an outline application, the big example being the waste recycling facility that was planned. The detrimental impact was seriously challenged by the residents. The massive scale of it was another problem, which never came to light in real terms, as far as residents are concerned. The third one that is worrying - and it is not part of this examination - is that when you have such large projects that affect the neighbouring boroughs, they are statutory consultees and Brent Council's objections were totally and entirely neglected. That was the experience for several years and not much has changed.

I would just like to finish with a comment I read yesterday from one of the Brent residents, who said that Brent is getting nothing out of this development except the traffic. That is not a good reflection on what the

communities should feel about major projects that are going to affect them for decades. I do not know whether you want to comment. I would like to move on, otherwise.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): Given that the focus of this is community consultation, I guess that would be the thing to comment on. As I say, the development partners do not have regard to the Council boundary. They do look across the boundary into Brent and indeed into Camden. That is completely appropriate.

I am aware that Brent Council has particular concerns around the traffic and indeed as part of the section 106 [agreement] there is a pot of money for measures to put retrospective changes in. They have tried to design the road schemes to avoid any rat-running through the Brent residential areas. We recognise that car drivers are ingenious and will find some things we have not identified and so we have a pot of money set aside to put in place measures if rat-runs do come to light that have not been spotted by the traffic modelling. We have taken account of the concerns in that area. Certainly I know that the Planning Committee will have weighed all of the objections that were put to it by statutory and non-statutory consultees.

In terms of poor information and lack of meaningful consultation in the past, as I say, I cannot comment. I have read the statements of community involvement that were produced at the time by the London Communications Agency and they certainly do suggest that there was a great deal of consultation that went across the border. Certainly going forward, we will be wanting to take account the views of neighbouring residents, whichever borough they happen to live in.

“Nothing but the traffic” I would definitely disagree with. There are going to be huge opportunities coming out of this development. If we look just at employment opportunities, there are very significant employment opportunities from the new shopping centre and the commercial development. There are a large number of Brent residents who will benefit from that. Where we have been very inclusive is that we have not defined ‘local residents’ as Barnet residents in any of our section 106 agreements relating to employment, education and training. We have been very clear that ‘local residents’ means anyone who lives nearby, whether they are a Camden resident, a Brent resident or a Barnet resident. We will be making sure that Brent and Camden residents are able to access those job opportunities as well.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): On that positive note, we will move on to my questions. I have a number of questions and these are all related to social infrastructure. I have a very negative view about this aspect in that I do not believe planning authorities or local councils quite give social infrastructure the priority it requires, in terms of the major role that social infrastructure plays when you talk about development planning or, in particular, large projects like Brent Cross.

Can I start with you, Cath? Just a broad question. What considerations do you make when assessing the type and scale of social infrastructure that is required for particular neighbourhoods and planning applications? Do you give that focus?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): ‘Social infrastructure’ is a very wide term and it plays out differently in respect of different types of social infrastructure. For schools, we have a statutory responsibility to provide enough school places. Barnet and most councils have very well-established processes of school place-planning. There is a very clear focus on schools.

Health centres are somewhere where we have found it harder in the past. Particularly during stages when the National Health Service (NHS) has been undergoing a lot of internal change, it has found it quite difficult to make decisions about health centres. We are now in a much stronger position with the NHS.

At our other big Opportunity Area in Colindale, we are just completing a piece of work to look at health needs on the A5 from North Circular up to Edgware to make sure that we can deliver the right amount of general practitioner (GP) expansion and new health centres in Colindale. I know that a number of Colindale residents would say that that has come later than they would like. It has taken a while for the NHS to be a position where it can engage in that conversation. It is now doing so. We have just concluded consultation on health provision in Colindale and the wider A5 area. We will go through a similar process with the NHS on Brent Cross, I am sure, because there are existing GPs who serve the area, some of whom may have aspirations to expand and some of whom may not. We need to understand that before we look at need provision.

Then you have the community infrastructure in terms of community meeting spaces, halls and so on. I can see that Mr Dismore [AM] is not warming to what I am saying necessarily, but I think we have done a good job. The Colindale Communities Trust has just completed a piece of work with the Council to audit all of the community activity that happens in the Colindale area to inform the design and distribution of new community spaces. For example, we do not want to build very large community spaces if it turns out that what we have are lots of small craft groups. Equally, there is no point in us building lots of smaller rooms if we have lots of badminton tournaments happening. We do need to understand in a slightly more granular way some of the range of community activities that go on to make sure that we can specify the right mix of halls, rentable spaces and meeting rooms for different groups. That is something we are a little bit further ahead with in Colindale, but again I am sure it is a process that in due course we will work through in the context of Brent Cross.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): From your experience as a planner for your borough and generally, do you think there is an approach of proactive work with communities to find out what their requirements or aspirations are for social infrastructure?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): I am not a planner, I should say. I do not come from a planning background.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Planning colleagues?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): Not that I would mind if I were a planner, but I am not. It is probably done better on the very large schemes, if I am honest, because it is easier to get to grips with. Certainly, yes, we have been proactive in working with the Colindale Communities Trust to understand that mapping. As I say, we are not quite there yet on Brent Cross in terms of the detail but it is certainly something we will be wanting to have with the community going forward.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Just continuing, how do you balance the priorities of the developer, in terms of providing that social infrastructure for the project, versus those of the community? You always get, I would say, the developer proposing X and the community saying, "Rubbish. It is no good. We want more", or, "We want something entirely different".

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): All of these schemes are about trading off all kinds of different interests to get to a sensible suggestion. That, in

many ways, is part of the art of the scheme. That is something that does get looked at in the planning system but also, in the case of Council-led regeneration, through our regeneration structures. Section 106 is a powerful tool. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) gives us a lot of control over the money.

It is probably also worth saying that in the case of Brent Cross, one of the reasons that we wanted to go into joint venture with Argent is to enable us to have that conversation in a slightly more partnership-type way rather than being in a position where we have a more adversarial relationship. It is not adversarial and we are partners, but we wanted to be involved in the scheme and in helping to shape it. That is one of our motivations for getting into a joint venture with Argent rather than simply saying, "Here is a bit of land. Get on and regenerate it".

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): I have a question for Ciron [Edwards]. How do you work with the community to manage expectations when a particular social infrastructure project is not realistic enough to be delivered? You can think about it.

Before you come in, can I ask Pauline and Pat [Turnbull] if they want to come in on this whole aspect of social infrastructure requirement? What do you think your experience is?

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): We have not had much discussion yet about the social infrastructure. The public inquiry on CPO has to go ahead. The first development will be from Hammerson and it says that until it knows that is out of the way, it is not going to start doing its part. I do not know if this is correct, Cath [Shaw]. We are still waiting for any changes.

I see in the plans that there is one community centre and a library down and a leisure centre. We already have a leisure centre but that is going to be demolished. Obviously, we want that replaced but I cannot see how one community centre, unless it is quite large, is going to be enough. We are just starting, perhaps, on these discussions.

It is very important that we do know what can be changed and what cannot. As Ciron [Edwards] has said, if we say we want all these things and then when it goes to the developer or the joint venture they say, "We cannot deliver this", then there is no point. We do need to know earlier on what we can change or if we can change anything.

We still do not know whether the farm buildings are going to be knocked down or not. It is said that there is no decision made that they were going to demolish them, whereas they were going to demolish them. Now they have said - it is in this report - that they might be kept. These sorts of things we want to know now, really, so that people can plan. They do not want to be putting things on, building up and doing things, and then be told in two years' time, "No, it is too expensive to redo the farm buildings. They have to be knocked down after all". These sorts of things we need to know - and that would be a decision for the joint venture - so that we are not wasting our time.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): The difficulty with these developments is that the priority of the developer is to get as much market housing and as big a shopping centre as possible in there. As far as the local community is concerned, it is a very much a minor consideration. In the Elephant [and Castle regeneration], for example, we lost a large leisure centre. I do not know if the replacement has even been built yet. It has been built? It is smaller.

In Woodberry Down there is a swimming pool at the bottom of the private tower block but local residents cannot use it. Their community hall was demolished and it has been replaced by a smaller community hall at the bottom of a block of flats. Obviously there is a limit as to how noisy you can be and so on and so forth. There is a library there but it is staffed by volunteers so it is often not open. The provision on Woodberry Down of public facilities is much worse now than it was before the development started. That is the problem, is it not?

I remember talking to some residents of Woodberry Down and they said it was extremely hard to find out what the financial situation was and how much they could really demand of the developer to provide. That is where this question of viability studies and so on comes into it. We know that developers are making massive amounts of money out of these developments and yet it seems impossible for the Council to squeeze a few things for the local people out of them.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Ciron, managing expectations?

Ciron Edwards (Associate Director, Soundings): First of all, 'social infrastructure' is quite an interesting term because when you start talking about it to local people, yes, you talk about schools, you talk about healthcare, you talk about road networks and you talk about utilities. In some of the projects I am working on at the moment, we are talking about all of this breadth. A lot of this is quite often out of the hands of the developers, requiring a much higher level of agreement with councils. Where it becomes interesting is the extra stuff that can be added on and enforced through a section 106 agreement.

In terms of managing expectations, the important thing is to ensure, as I said earlier, that we get the right people in front of the community at the right time to talk through these issues. Your briefing pack alludes to one of the projects that we worked on over in Deptford, the Deptford Wharves, and how the consultation process retained the Victoria Pub and, through a co-design process with the local community, it has now created an interim use. The interim use is a very useful project. I know these projects tend to take a long time and I know that has a lot of issues for local communities, but the interim use has a potential to explore these. In the case of the Victoria Pub, it is going to be a training kitchen. It is going to be open to the community and it is going to be there for between three and five years and potentially slightly longer, with a view to moving on to other premises if it succeeds. Essentially, it is a test bed.

Going back to the Heygate Estate, we are still working with the developer there on the temporary park, which is scheduled to open next year. There is a park within the scheme and through the section 106 agreement the Council is enforcing a requirement for a temporary or an interim park to be open as early as possible. Next year does not sound too early, but we are working with community representatives there to explore not just the design but the cultural programming of that and how that park can become something of the community rather than something that is surrounded by a very different type of development to the local area. It is an interesting thing there because we not managing expectations because are using it as a test bed. These are being put up to try to see what happens and whether we can really push those boundaries.

In terms of managing expectations, it is important that we work with people and put them in front of the right people, whether the developer or the local council, and that there is that engagement and that conversation to really understand what is possible at the earliest point in the project we can do that.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Debbie, does the GLA have any means of measuring whether regeneration projects we support in terms of funding, etc, are delivering any aspects of social infrastructure, of what quality and kind they are, and the issues involved with that?

Debbie Jackson (Assistant Director - Regeneration, GLA): It depends on how you define 'social infrastructure'. What we historically have not been involved with, particularly through my work, is physical social infrastructure: schools, community centres and things like that. If 'social infrastructure' extends to the involvement of people, going back to my previous answer, and the extent to which local communities are involved in activities around their town centres, for example, then we have been measuring that and we intend to continue to do so.

Can I take this opportunity to tell you about some work that we have been doing? It follows on from the point that Ciron [Edwards] just made about the importance of testing approaches. One of the things we have been quite interested to do over the last 18 months is start to change the way that government is interacting with communities, in particular offering opportunities for communities to propose and even fund projects that they believe are important in their local area.

Just to tell you a little bit more about what I mean by that, it is around our Civic Crowdfunding pilot. This enables the crowdsourcing of ideas from local communities and crowdfunding from local communities to support these projects. It is small amounts, £5 or £10, but people are coming together and funding projects. What we are doing is we are taking the Mayor's funding and we are, in effect, making the Mayor one of the crowd. We invite projects from local and community groups. In that way, we are releasing the creativity of local communities.

Traditionally we have always worked through local authorities and we have delivered some amazing projects through local authorities, but we wanted to widen the scope of that. We are inviting projects in. We have to shortlist because we have finite amounts of money, so we choose projects to support and we pledge a certain amount from the Mayor. The Mayor becomes one of the crowd and that act of supporting a project, broadly speaking, is tripling the level of crowdfunding that is coming in on those projects. To give you a couple of examples, the coal line in Southwark, which is the Peckham coal line, has a total of 928 backers now. The Mayor is one of them. That is 927 individual decisions in the local community to get behind that project. Good Food in Catford has a total of 344 backers.

The reason why I am raising it here is that it follows on from the point that Ciron made about testing. We were keen to pilot this approach, in terms of the crowdfund, to see if it worked, but also the projects that come out of it are testing ways to get the community involved in local areas. We have supported nearly 40 projects. In fact today, at this moment, we are just launching round three. There is a total of £700,000 left to apply to this fund across round three and round four.

It goes back to what I said earlier in the session about trying to create ways for the public sector to engage with communities that perhaps are not how we have been expected to engage traditionally. There will always be a place for consultation and there will always be a place for information-giving and more traditional routes as well, but we are trying to change the emphasis a little bit.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): On the funding aspects, Cath, if I can come back to you, is it possible to include communities in determining how CIL money is spent?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): Yes. We are required to do that. There is a proportion of the CIL that has to go to local determination of how that is spent. It varies. There is some control over how much. In out-of-London contexts that tends to be devolution to a parish council or a smaller tier of government. The approach we have taken in Barnet is to

make that money available to area committees, which operate at the level of a parliamentary constituency. Those area committees are directing that expenditure of the local element of CIL in accordance with guidelines that are derived from the national guidelines, where local communities can put forward projects to be funded. Yes, there is an element of local direction.

I would absolutely endorse what Debbie [Jackson] and Ciron [Edwards] have said about short-term uses, experimentation and 'meanwhile uses', as we call them: what you do with a space while something else is being prepared. There are some great examples at King's Cross around things like allotments in skips because people wanted growing food to be part of the experience that young people and older people had of living in King's Cross. Because there was no place that could be an allotment throughout the period, they had skip allotments. That was one example of an interim use that can be moved around.

One of the things that we liked and that the residents liked in the Argent proposal for Brent Cross was a list of 20 quick wins, which are things that they had noticed in going around the local area that could be improved around existing walking routes, accesses and parks. Could there be some short-term, quick changes that improve things for the local community? Pat [Turnbull] is absolutely right that some of these projects can be extremely long-term. Recognising that these projects are long-term with that idea of experimentation, of something that you can deliver now and something that is a quick, simple investment in the place to make it nicer for people who are there at the moment rather than promising jam tomorrow is a really important aspect of all of this.

Ciron Edwards (Associate Director, Soundings): I just wanted to add because I am working on a number of regeneration projects at the moment that social infrastructure is vitally important. It is vitally important to local people but when those discussions begin, you have to recognise that other issues have to have been dealt with first. We have already been talking about the loss of people's homes. That is a crucial thing to talk about first.

Local communities often feel as though they are being distracted from the main issue or that a discussion around social infrastructure is going to be used to justify change. Although it is an extremely important part of consultation, we have to look at what the fundamental part of that particular project is. If you are talking about estate regeneration, there is a very important question to have discussed first and to have gotten a consensus on - however much - before we begin on the things that really make a place work. We have to make sure that that initial point has been discussed and consulted on properly and correctly.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Pat, I was going to ask you if you have had any experience of positive benefits from CIL on this particular subject.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): I am afraid I do not know anything about the CIL and how it is operating except that, regrettably, I note that it cannot be used for housing, which is a limitation.

I did want to say something about the interim uses because that also causes its own pain. For example, in the Dalston development there is the Dalston Curve garden and café, which is very nice. It has been laid out by the people responsible and has become a little haven in the middle of the Dalston development for a lot of people, but it is only an interim use. It is going to go away and it is going to become a walkway between two areas of development. In a way it was nice, but it is going to go and it is not going to be replaced like-for-like.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Pauline, from your perspective, have you had anything to do with the CIL and the benefits that you reckon you have had or might get from local projects?

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): I do not know. The Millennium Green has had money from the area committee but I did not know that came from the CIL.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): It may not have done. We have always given some budget to area committee and we have subsequently topped that budget up with CIL. It may be that it was simply the area committee's own budget that funded it. It is relatively recently that CIL has been going through.

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): It is a very recent thing but it is an excellent idea that the area committees can spend money. Nearly all the people that put in their projects were passed.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): It is something for you now to consider--

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): It was a nice mood in the room because it was something positive that we felt the Council was able to do. The councillors seemed to be quite pleased as well.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Just generally to the panel, can you think of any innovative ways or different methods by which communities can be empowered to get better community facilities or - what we are talking about - social infrastructure? Is there anything else that can be done to make them more powerful so that local communities get what they want?

Pauline McKinnell (Secretary, Cricklewood Community Forum): In our community they are only really starting to talk to us. That has to start: to talk to the local people and to spend time. I do not feel it has happened. It is beginning to start.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Debbie, you talked about crowdfunding as one of your tools. Is there anything else you can think of that can help?

Debbie Jackson (Assistant Director - Regeneration, Greater London Authority): The only other point that I would add is the importance of recognising the capacity that exists within communities to engage. It takes time for networks to build and it takes time for issues to be understood. In any engagement or consultation process, it is essential that the consulter - be it the developer or the public sector - acknowledges that and thinks about how it can help to build that capacity within the community as well. We are seeing exciting things happen in London where strong networks exist within communities. A good question for us to ask ourselves is how we can enable that to happen.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): If I could add to that, the GLA and the boroughs together have done some fantastic work in town centres. That has been very much not around the GLA and the borough going in and just doing something to a town centre. It has been very much around creating a town team, whereby businesses and residents come together to say what they want for their town centre. We all learnt a lot in setting those up and in enabling those to direct the spending that has been available from the Outer London Fund. Obviously it is an outer London thing --

Debbie Jackson (Assistant Director - Regeneration, Greater London Authority): Other funds do exist.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): Other funds are available, yes. We have learnt an awful lot from that and we can start to apply some of that thinking in other contexts and in schemes like Brent Cross. Certainly in the town centres we have learnt a great deal.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): Any kind of local organisation where local people come together and talk about what is going on, and are listened to, is very helpful. There have been difficulties in organisation in the past couple of decades. For example, on the question of tenants' and residents' associations, the situation as far as organisation goes is much worse than it was 20 years ago for a number of reasons, one of them being the reduction in funding from local councils to tenants' and residents' organisations.

I believe that strong tenants' and residents' associations are extremely important if we care about the long-term interests of the people who live in London because they are the people who live on the estates, who organise the people who live on the estates and in the areas and who can best represent what is in their interests. It is regrettable that the state of tenants' and residents' associations is as small, as poor and as diminished as it is at the moment. That is my view, anyway. Probably some people find it quite convenient because there is not a strong voice for tenants and residents and they can do as they like.

Ciron Edwards (Associate Director, Soundings): To answer your question and to continue what Pat [Turnbull] was just saying, it is about local ownership. If projects are born out of the local population, they have a much greater chance of succeeding and being something that the local people want to see. The most successful community centres you find around the place tend to be run and operated by people whose heart is really in it. That is part of what they give to the community and it is their passion. It does come down to highly motivated people in the end to make these things a success, a true success.

Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Andrew Dismore AM: I wanted to come back to the CIL. Allocating it on a constituency basis means that the monies tend to be spread over quite a wide area. How do you make sure that the money from the places where the CIL is generated, for example Brent Cross, is spent for the benefit of those people in Brent Cross? For example, if you take Brent Cross proper, that constituency spreads all the way up virtually as far as the M1. How do you make sure that money is not spent in Edgware?

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): That is one of the factors that the local elected representatives take account of when they are making their decisions. As it happens, that particular constituency has very significant development all the way through it and so it probably does not matter if some money generated in Brent Cross is spent in Edgware because there will be some money generated in Colindale spent in Cricklewood and some money generated in Stonegrove spent in Colindale. That particular constituency has a very substantial element of development and therefore is benefiting a lot from CIL.

Andrew Dismore AM: That is the point, is it not? There is a huge development but not necessarily an even spread of the CIL money.

Cath Shaw (Commissioning Director - Growth and Development, London Borough of Barnet): It is important to say that the locally allocated bit is only a small portion of the CIL. We have a borough-wide infrastructure plan that has, I believe, 500 items of infrastructure, of which 200 are in the Brent Cross scheme. All of our CIL and all of our New Homes Bonus are put into an infrastructure reserve, which is then used to fund the items in that infrastructure plan. Services from across the Council are able to flag up, for example,

that we need provision for under-twos here or we need provision for this activity there. That goes into the infrastructure plan and that is funded from the infrastructure reserve. There is a mechanism in addition to the locally directed element to make sure that the infrastructure needs across the borough are met.

Andrew Dismore AM: Pardon my scepticism.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): A final word to you then, Pat.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): It is not a final word. I have a document here about opportunity and intensification areas. It was produced by Just Space. Would I be able to give it to the Members? Would that be all right?

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): You would. If you have it electronically, you could e-mail it and we could circulate it that way or, if you have hard copies for everyone, you could do that now.

Pat Turnbull (Just Space): I have copies of it here.

Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman): Perhaps we can distribute that when we wrap up. Can I thank our guests for their contributions today?

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