

## Co-design review & community engagement in planning – discussion of community experience DRAFT v1

### Notes from the discussion in PV Bussey studio 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017

**Present:** Eileen Conn, Clyde Watson, Robin Blanchard, Ian Redding, Paula Orr, Julie Brinkworth, Derek Kinrade, Corinne Turner, Ben Hyde, Kay Nooney, Francesca Schiavone, Ish Lennox, Michelle Shaw, Chinyere Okorie, Jonny Zander (Kaizen consultants)

#### 1 & 2. Introductions & experience

Eileen Conn welcomed everyone and said that Peckham Vision had arranged the discussion to see if there was anything to add to the Kaizen review report on the Station and Library Squares co-design process ([http://www.2.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/4763/learning\\_the\\_lessons\\_on\\_co-design\\_in\\_southwark](http://www.2.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/4763/learning_the_lessons_on_co-design_in_southwark)), and to discuss together the way the report could be followed up with the Council. She thanked Jonny Zander for being willing to take part in this discussion after his project contract had concluded. Everyone introduced themselves and then spoke with their neighbours in pairs for 10 minutes about their experience of the co-design/other consultation projects.

#### 3. Co-design review

Jonny Zander gave a brief introduction to the purpose and conduct of the review that they had carried out for Southwark Council of the two co-design projects Peckham Rye Station, and Peckham Library Square. He said they had not had any conversations with Southwark Council since they delivered their report, so had no knowledge of the proposed follow up. In the discussion of individual and community experience of the CoDesign process and the review report it was agreed that it was very good finally to have the review many residents had sought and the report covered a lot of the right issues, but not quite all. We looked in the discussion at points to add, learning from our experience, the issues the report brought up and what next. All the points captured on the flip chart in the discussion for items 3 and 4 are listed in the Annex.

Key points made that need more emphasis, or follow up or were additional to the report included:

- The need for the development of a framework for collaboration was strongly endorsed and emphasised that this needed to be developed collaboratively with the community sector.
- Co-design should be seen and used as part of a well defined package of community engagement processes in the overall framework for community engagement.
- There was a key need which had been missed for facilitating or supporting a continuing horizontal community dialogue alongside the formal/official vertical co-design and engagement process.
- There could be a register held by the council of community active citizens/groups already engaged in supporting the work of the borough as the Southwark Young Advisors highlighted in the report. This could be extended to other local groups.
- An agreed process needs to be created on how residents could be involved in the contractual process of co-design, to avoid conflicts of interest, promote diversity and ensure effective feedback to the community.
- There needs to be some form of public accountability for architects or others to do what they have said, when tendering for contracts, they will do in community engagement,

#### 4. Collaborative community engagement

Ian Redding gave a brief introduction to the new Council Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Strategy [http://www.2.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/4747/vcs\\_strategy\\_2016](http://www.2.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/4747/vcs_strategy_2016). This is all about the need for and development of effective collaborative working arrangements between the Council, the CCG (NHS Clinical Commissioning Group) and the voluntary and community sector. Eileen and Ian pointed out the references in the VCS strategy document to collaborative approaches to community engagement in place making, planning and regeneration. All of this needs to include lessons from the co-design experiences, and to be integrated as a whole approach.

The following points were highlighted:

- We currently have a moment of opportunity with Southwark Council in the form of the VCS strategy.

- We need to get community groups more involved in Community Southwark membership to ensure that the community sector is able to contribute to the way this is all developed.
- Effective engagement between the community, architects/planning, Council will only happen if there is an independent facilitation process.
- Independent facilitation will lead to a good collaborative process allowing all to move towards consensus – even if we can't expect consensus to be achieved fully we can expect good dialogue.
- How do we ensure the independence of facilitators? When it is the council who will have to pay them?
- The co-design review report suggested a "resident advocate" model. It comes from good practise in estate regeneration. Is this a useful model for future discussion and engagement?
- There is a conflict of interest between architects leading co-design initiatives when they are seeking to work/already working with the council on other projects. This reiterates the question Why is it architects who lead on community engagement? And again highlights the need for independent facilitation.

### 5. Way forward and next actions

1. Notes from tonight's meeting will be written up and circulated for comment.
2. Commitment to continue working with Community Southwark on the strategy.
3. Consider whether this group/individuals should make a response to the report.
4. Press Community Southwark to take forward co-design review recommendations along with community sector aspects of the VCS strategy.
5. Press towards achieving greater accountability from Southwark Council "You said, We did"
6. Reflect on merits of a meeting with Neil Kirby.

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### Typed up comments from the flip charts

### ANNEX

#### 3. Co-design review

- Different stakeholders: Council, Community, Architects, each have different knowledge, power and aspirations – these are difficult to reconcile.
- Role of facilitators in presenting findings – do they "make them fit" to the desires of those with/in power.
- More consensus around negative points that weren't brought out – could the process have been clearer?
- No community review process.
- The meeting agreed the importance of having someone independent to review – provide feedback loop.
- Council has already made decisions; it is unclear what the role of the community is.
- Role of the architects – is that changing? They are typically given the task of community engagement – should it be this way? Is training changing for council officers regarding community engagement? Does it need to change?
- No continuing community dialogue.
- There has to be a continued and improved effort by the council in assisting the community to engage and share in a dialogue.
- There could be a register held by the council of community infrastructures/assets/active citizens/groups already engaged in supporting the work of the borough. These groups/people could be drawn on.
- These groups could have useful ideas on how to work with hard to reach areas of the community whose voice is underrepresented.
- Attention is needed on how residents should be involved in the contractual process, to avoid conflict of interest and to promote diversity.
- There needs to be a framework for collaboration.
- Structures need to be in place so that everyone can question things. The council needs to operate with greater transparency.
- It is difficult for community members to be involved in architects bidding process, least this lead to issues of integrity and potential conflicts of interest.
- An example was given regarding the architects selected for the train station redevelopment. The architect submitted a vision of what the station square should look like before listening to anyone in the community. That architectural company had also written a strong word on co-design which they did not adhere to. The architects firm was not held accountable by the council for their lack of commitment to the co-design process.
- Report writer JZ, clarified it was not in his remit to look at the legal contracts or the brief given to architects by the council.

- There is an important and urgent need to develop through coproduction a framework of co-design. This is needed to rebuild trust between the community and the council.
- The council needs to have a collaborative process for a response to the review, not just leave this hanging in the air, with no one knowing when the response will happen.
- There was no clear definition of co-design throughout the process – this led to misunderstanding, miscommunication and different expectations.
- It was noted that there are clear links between good co-design/community engagement processes and the health/well-being of the community in the long term.
- It was stated that scale of any project should not be a consideration on whether co-design happens – small developments may generate greater emotion. All new developments are worthy of co-design process.
- Use of co-design should be linked to a revamped and improved community engagement process.
- Lack of transparency in council community engagement needs to be addressed.
- Current planning process relates to the legal system and therefore appears very adversarial. There needs to be a meshing (new way of working) in order to meet the needs of the legal/planning system with community engagement/co-design. This is a process which requires all parties to think about what that new way of working would be.
- Peckham has experienced very different outcomes to the 2 co-design experiences, supposedly we were picking from the same palette of options, but the experience and outcomes were radically different – how does that happen?
- The challenge of inclusion, needs to be addressed, how are people engaged before it's too late, who should do this?

#### **4. Collaborative community engagement**

- We currently have a moment of opportunity with Southwark Council in the form of the VCS strategy.
- How do we get Community Southwark to ensure that this strategy is observed and built upon?
- We need to get community groups more involved in Community Southwark membership to ensure that the community sector is able to contribute to the way this is all developed.
- It is noted that no one from LBS Planning department was involved in this strategy – currently planning has no mechanisms in which to bring in community experience.
- How do we move on to engage planning department with community expertise? Who is responsible to build greater links and to facilitate co-design?
- There needs to be ongoing conversation with Community Southwark and others in the community about lessons coming out of the co-design review.
- It was suggested that a possible meeting with Neil Kirby regarding the community experience of co-design, the report and the review process might be helpful.
- Effective engagement between the community, architects/planning, Council will only happen if there is an independent facilitation process.
- Independent facilitation will lead to a good collaborative process allowing all to move towards consensus – even if we can't expect consensus to be achieved fully we can expect good dialogue.
- The experience of the co-design process highlighted to people that there was very poor communication between council officers and community stakeholders. The example was given that there were no posters in the station highlighting that a model of the building was available to look at.
- Council officers didn't take responsibility for better communication, nor did they seem interested in listening to how communication could be improved. It was as though communication was not in their job description so they didn't prioritise this task.
- Statements of community involvement are a tick box exercise, too little too late. This can frustrate members of the community and stop them from getting involved in future initiatives.
- How do we ensure the independence of facilitators? When it is the council who will have to pay their salary?
- Residents could ask for scrutiny of how the co-design process was experienced and reviewed. This fits within the CVS strategy but is another thing to do and potentially does not build trust.
- There is a conflict of interest between architects leading co-design initiatives when they are seeking to work/already working with the council on other projects. This reiterates the question Why is it architects who lead on community engagement? And again highlights the need for independent facilitation.
- Role of councillors and council officers have very different tasks, this is reflected in the way the address community engagement.
- More people need to know about the CVS strategy.
- CVS appears to be highly quantitative and needs to become more qualitative. How does this happen?
- The co-design review report suggested a "resident advocate" model. It comes from good practise in estate regeneration. Is this a useful model for future discussion and engagement?