

High Street Challenge Fund Round 2

Cleaner Peckham Project

April 2016

**COPELAND PARK &
BUSSEY BUILDING**
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Peckham
Vision
*For an integrated
town centre*

**RYE LANE TRADERS'
ASSOCIATION
(RLTA)**
*Working for
an integrated town centre...*

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 Southwark
Council

High Street Challenge Cleaner Peckham Project. Final Report of the Steering Group

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Appendix A – Waste: Thinking differently, acting differently, getting different results

High Street Challenge Cleaner Peckham Project.

Final Report of the Steering Group

Introduction and background

The Cleaner Peckham Project was initiated by the Rye Lane Traders Association (RLTA) Development Committee with Peckham Vision and Copeland Park to assist all interested and directly affected parties, to understand the broader waste issues in Peckham Town Centre more clearly. A steering group was formed in June 2015 consisting of the following members;

- Lorelie Wilson (Copeland Park, local business owner)
- Eileen Conn (Peckham Vision Coordinator, local resident)
- Jenny Wales (local resident, coordinator of FoodCycle Peckham)
- Katie Lindsay (local resident with expertise in waste management)
- Elaine Carrigan (RLTA Development Committee member, local trader)
- Corinne Turner (RLTA Development Committee member, local resident)

Funding was awarded by High Street Challenge 2 fund to facilitate research into existing waste collection and recycling in Peckham town centre, to produce a report into the findings and make suggested improvements. In particular we wanted to establish the facts of the current waste collection and disposal systems; the deficiencies of those systems and feasible improvements (especially in innovative approaches to recycling); and look at alternative areas and opportunities for waste storage, collection and disposal.

Aware of the highly complex nature and strong feelings on the topic of Peckham Town Centre waste, we commissioned experienced social researchers to help us carry out an objective, measured and reflective piece of research. Our researchers¹ took a narrative and thematic approach to their research which was ideally suited to producing a more reflective and in-depth understanding of the issues from many different perspectives. It strongly demonstrated that there were no simple solutions but required a multi faceted creative approach involving stakeholder engagement and dialogue. Their report was entitled **“Thinking differently, acting differently, getting different results.”** It is attached as Appendix A. While we have summarised its findings, and considered their recommendations in forming our own, it merits a thorough reading as an integral part of this report.

¹ Francisco Calafate-Faria and Luna Glucksberg have had wide experience in waste research including recycling markets, community recycling, residential waste and have used social research skills as an approach to produce the report.

What have we learned?

This first section contains a precis of the issues that Luna and Francisco's research uncovered that contribute to the waste problem in Peckham Town Centre detailing particularly the issues that we felt can be addressed.

- a) The majority of the problems with waste emanate from Rye Lane², and much of the problems are to do with the removal of pallets, cardboard and other packaging³.
- b) The staggering amount of waste collected by the street collection team (approx 8.2 tons per day); This includes a large amount of recyclable materials such as cardboard, (cardboard is collected for recycling but not all of it), food packaging boxes, and food waste - which contaminates other streams of waste.
- c) The report documents the 6 types of waste producers in Peckham Town Centre, their particular waste stream and differing collection arrangements.⁴ These arrangements can be in conflict and lead to confusion about who leaves their waste out when and where. It can look like waste has been indiscriminately dumped - encouraging others to do the same.
- d) Ergo, there is a lot of informal disposal of waste.
- e) The report identified several hotspots where waste and fly-tipping accumulates and are both visible and in people's way, usually at key junctions along the street. This isn't dependent on where there is space for waste to be left for collection, but where is convenient for the waste producer. It highlights the fact that there needs to be specific waste storage locations
- f) There is a lack of up to date information, communication or visual signage about current waste arrangements from the council, in terms of time banding of collections and appropriate location for waste being left for location. Particularly where this is contradicted by what actually happens.
- g) Businesses are acutely unaware of their legal obligations regarding waste. Many don't have a waste licence - if they do, it may not be adequate for their needs: commercial waste that is not paid for is placed on the street for collections. In particular the Rye Lane culture of fluidity between market traders and businesses based in shops (often subletting a space there) and misconceptions that the same rules of waste left out for collection by the council applies to stalls in shop units.
- h) Commercial waste collection appears ad-hoc.

2 p6
3 P22
4 p11

- i) The street collection team appear to collect everything that is put out, regardless of who has put it out and if they should be collecting it or not⁵ The impact this has on traders' habits of rubbish disposal, undermining other collection systems and protocol as "*disposal habits tend to follow collection rhythms.*"⁶
- j) The visual cue inadvertently given by the council litter pickers leaving their full waste bags by bins often outside of the banded collection times.⁷
- k) The recently introduced council cardboard collection has led to people leaving cardboard out at all times.⁸ It is also in contradiction to the fact that businesses should be legally responsible for removal of their waste.
- l) There is no formal separation of business waste for recycling, other than the cardboard the council collects. Currently there is little incentive from commercial contracted waste providers for recycling of much packaging materials that is recyclable.
- m) There is a lack of trust and suspicion towards the council from many businesses, their fear of fining and legal threats.⁹ The research found that this was a major barrier to collecting quantifiable data about amounts and types of waste produced by businesses. This barrier to good data is a major obstacle that needs to be tackled in order to developing more effective and integrated decisions.
- n) Yet, despite this, there is inadequate enforcement of the many waste infringements. People "get away with it" and this is to an extent encouraged by the indiscriminate collections by Southwark Street Teams" albeit in order to keep Peckham Town Centre clean.
- o) Residential waste collection is unsatisfactory and inadequate. The insufficient information and facilities for current residential waste contributes further to the rubbish in Peckham Town Centre¹⁰ particularly with residential units increasing all the time. This includes lack of clear and accessible recycling facilities, for residents and others.
- p) There is a blame culture among different stakeholders but it is an issue all people care about and are keen to solve.¹¹

5 P12-13

6 p12-13

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8 P12-13

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11 p28

Actions and Outcomes

This section firstly considers and addresses recommendations made by our researchers, before putting forward our own plan of suggested actions.

As a steering group, we would very much like to work closely with the council, particularly councillors and departments/officers who have responsibility for waste, recycling and for the development of Peckham Town Centre. At the time of writing we have not been able to meet with all these parties but are keen to do so and actively seeking it. We are aware of potential and imminent changes that are afoot but have not yet been “officially enlightened!” What follows are suggestions for ways forward that we would like to take further and discuss.

Our researchers’ recommendations and our thoughts on these...

Luna and Francisco’s key conclusion was the need for a unique and integrated solution *“...that addresses the problem under a strategic and collaborative perspective involving the largest possible part of the population who use, live and work in PTC can be successful and sustainable.”*¹² As a Steering group we fundamentally agreed with this assessment that there was no off the peg solution and that it would involve work from many different people on all sides with serious stakeholder engagement.

They put forward three key suggestions which we have evaluated here:

- 1) Luna and Francisco suggest treating Rye Lane shops as a market, due mainly to the nature of the shops often being a collection of market stalls inside the shop, and the Trader's approach to acting as market stalls. For this to work there must first be a challenge to unpick who has the legal responsibility for waste generated within shop units: is it on individual sub letters or the owner of the shop as a whole? There is possibly a business case for a specific waste collection service to collect from such small food retailers (not market sellers). Depending on the imminent contractual changes it would be interesting to see if this could be a contracted service offered by Southwark (who seem to default to collect it anyway).
- 2) They suggest schemes of collection by waste stream. This could be an effective way of consolidating waste collections. It would also be a good way of increasing recycling (for example cardboard which is not all collected currently, and foodwaste). The challenge would be communicating new collection routines and ensuring that businesses were on board; both in terms of taking contracts out and in terms of sorting and putting waste out at the correct times.
- 3) They propose a Business Improvement District. BIDs have been very successful in a number of town centre areas in addressing waste management issues, reducing waste related traffic and achieving cost savings for businesses through joint procurement and by

subsidising collections of recycling. A BID levy is chargeable on businesses over a certain rateable value threshold set by the BID company. Our main reservation about a BID is that it would take about 3 years to set up so won't provide an immediate solution to the problem, particularly when Peckham town centre is changing rapidly. Also, anecdotally we understand that in Peckham, a lot of the businesses have a low rateable value threshold, so the choice is to set the threshold low, to incorporate the very small businesses, or set it high and exclude some of the smaller businesses. BIDs that set a low threshold tend to struggle as they end up with a large number of members paying very low levies, creating a lot of work for little return, which is very difficult to manage. If the threshold was set higher in Peckham, those smaller businesses would not be entitled to the services, including subsidised recycling collections, however they could benefit from cheaper rates as a result of joint procurement savings. There could well be tension between those who receive a subsidy and those who don't. The possibility of a BID shouldn't be written off, but a next step would be for the council to examine the research done by The Means to see whether a BID would be viable in Peckham.

What would be our recommendations as a Steering Group?

Building on their recommendations with our own local knowledge and experience we developed a list of potential and important interventions which are detailed in the tables below. We found Luna and Francisco's grouping into three key dimensions of human, mechanical and visual helpful as a means of understanding both the complexity and the potential solutions and people involved in them. For clarity we have presented our recommendations reflecting these dimensions.

We have also identified important parts of further research and surveys that need to be carried out to better inform actions, these are included as a fourth dimension of recommendations for actions.

Our short term goals focus on quick wins, building trust, communication and a solutions focussed approach. Building on that in the Medium term are our suggested ideas of some creative ways forward for discussion. Not all of these suggestions will be appropriate but are creative solutions to explore in partnership with a widening stakeholder base and the council, hopefully.

It would be difficult for us to at this point to develop any long term concrete suggestions given a) the need for inclusion of a wider body of people b) the need to collaborate closer with the council in developing a definitive action plan. So in the long term we have detailed what we would aim to see in 2 years time in Peckham Town Centre.

Short Term. (6-12 months) *Winning hearts and minds to a joint vision for a cleaner town centre.*

Human	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Publicise this report and make it available for residents, traders and other interested parties to feedback their comments;2. Meet with people within the council to find out their current plans and thinking. We are due to meet with Darren Merrill, the cabinet member , and Ian Smith the senior officer for waste and recycling. We would like to meet also Alistair Huggett, regarding the implementation of the Peckham Shop Front (& public realm) Programme; this provides opportunity particularly for improving the visual dimension of waste within the town centre area.3. Holding a public meeting to highlight the report, in conjunction with the council; and present our findings at this meeting.4. Broaden and enlarge the current steering group to incorporate more stakeholders wanting to lead improvements on Peckham Town Centre. Involve appropriate council representatives in this. This group to meet on a regular basis.5. Ensure equalities issues are properly explored with the Council in relation to all the matters in this report.
Mechanical	<ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Council to re-evaluate, re-assert and re-communicate official collection times and locations for street and market collections; (we are aware these may be changing imminently so it may be communication of new systems); if there are existing agreed sites for street collection rubbish these to also be included in the communications; Official collection times to reflect experience of those carrying out the collections – who currently do it more often than official due to their return drive by.7. Council to develop cohesive communication strategy for waste collections for all users (residents, market trade, cardboard etc) including who is eligible for their rubbish to be collected and who isn't. This should include leaflets, posters and website information. There needs to be a commitment to regularly update this at least annually, ideally 6 monthly, and time spent educating and informing everyone about this; going to visit people in shops which could double as a PR and visibility exercise. This may be at a time of cost cutting by the council and so may necessitate community partnerships and external funding.8. Council to issue clearer guidance to all businesses and units in shops about what their responsibilities are, including their responsibilities to follow up with waste contractors for non collection of waste. To include reminder of enforcement and consequences of swerving the system.9. Identify sites for residential waste to be left for collection or for bins to be left for residential rubbish (creative solution on Bournemouth Close of installing

	wheelie bins carried out by one of the street team as an example)
Visual	<p>10. Carry out a visual survey of Peckham town centre to map waste hotspots (and possibly who is dumping in each). it could well be that by identifying hot spots it is clear who largely places rubbish in these hot spots as they don't seem to be very far from the shops frontages. By working with the biggest problem areas the issue could be much diminished and start to change the visual tone/culture in the Town Centre).</p> <p>11. Survey redundant street furniture and clutter; spaces and areas which need improvement and those which could be potential areas for waste storage and collection. This should be done in collaboration with the council officers responsible for allocating money to improve Rye Lane in particular.</p> <p>12. Better collaborative design with input from residents, small traders, businesses and property owners alike.</p> <p>13. Improve signage to current recycling facilities on Choumert Grove and in Peckham Rye Park</p> <p>14. Discuss with Council Development Control about their checks for waste collection and recycling facilities in new builds and converted property in Peckham Town Centre, both residential and business.</p> <p>15. Consider designing and commissioning in situ tables for traders with (movable) waste and recycling storage containers underneath the tables (would need to be lockable); so that they could easily sort waste and only bring it out when it is being collected, or easily transport it to a local waste collection point.</p>
Further research	<p>16. As a steering group we intend to carry out further research, the visual survey above is fundamental particularly to the Council's plans. For this we will be seeking further funding.</p> <p>In the present climate of fear and suspicion between the Council and the business owners, our researchers failed to obtain full information on waste streams and contractual information from many businesses. However, if more work is done on improving the communications and working relationships with the business owners, we would seek to ascertain more clearly waste types, statistics of volumes of different waste types, waste operators working in the area, times when waste is left out and by who.</p> <p>Establish how many businesses and which ones have contracts with the main waste suppliers and the amounts collected through this? Where they leave waste and where bins are located.</p> <p>Research with traders about where/how far they would be willing to go to dispose of their cardboard/food/packaging waste and how they would be able to</p>

	<p>transport it as preliminary steps into feasibility of establishing a local waste collection point. (see below)</p> <p>This could potentially be done by action research with a few key stall holders asking them to collect rubbish for a set time which we collect it and weigh it. (if as a group we are more known and established as independent from the council, while also traders see the council as a proactive part of solving the issue this info is more likely to happen)</p> <p>Collate information on street cleaning teams and litter picking to help look at logistical ways they could avoid being a visual cue for leaving bags of rubbish by bins.</p> <p>Understanding the cost of current operations, costs of our suggestions above and looking for available monies to improve things.</p>
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<p>Medium Term (12-24 months) <i>Exploring positive and creative solutions to waste and recycling on Rye Lane</i></p>	
<p>Human</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Run a reuse and recycle competition; involving local charities such as Pecan and London Reclaimed, and local art schools to come up with creative solutions and users for waste on Rye Lane. This would incentivise people to see waste as an opportunity and look at it positively, capitalising on the creative economy we have in Peckham. 2. Encouraging positive peer pressure, a culture of mutual responsibility by rewarding/incentivising good and exemplary behaviour within Peckham Town Centre; for example by establishing a Town Centre champions scheme. Following improved communication and education to new regime there needs to be a more thorough programme of enforcement, by the council enforcement officers. This should be done regularly such as 6 monthly due to high turnover.
<p>Mechanical</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Commission feasibility study/business plans (these all interlink but could be distinct) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - into localised waste and recycling site in the Town Centre area. This could include a stationary or mobile cardboard compactor, bins for compostable waste and storage for cooking oil, glass and large bins for rubbish collected by litter pickers. Discuss and plan about who would run the site. - plan for a local waste collection provider focussing on collecting specifically from small fresh food retailers (those who have transitioned into shop units from market stalls) - Identify potential reuse/recycling and social enterprise opportunities

	<p>from waste on Rye Lane eg: Food waste into Compost or Energy via Anaerobic Digestion; cardboard, pallets, Cooking Oil, Glass, A Scrap Project for Artists.</p> <p>4. Identify possible sites for more residential recycling facilities (possibly consider co locating this with potential localised waste and recycling for businesses)</p> <p>5. Develop a cohort of businesses willing to work together to negotiate a contract with a single provider to collect waste. Explore if a single provider model is feasible within the fragmented and ever changing businesses along Rye Lane.</p> <p>6. After period of communication and education, council to begin stricter enforcement, focussing particularly on people dumping in waste hotspots and those non market traders putting waste out for collection.</p>
Visual	<p>7. Look at design opportunities for planters/ seating as a means of discouraging rubbish dumping and fly tipping, particularly in more spacious areas just off Rye Lane. (This is a legacy of the Pocket Places project whose projects sadly have never been completed but we would hope elements could be completed). These actions to improve the public realm and remove waste collection black spots seem to be within the scope of the Peckham Shop Front Programme 2016-2018.</p>
Further research opportunities	<p>8. Developing a clearer directory of traders and businesses on rye lane (mapping them with an app, possibly used as an advertising and free marketing tool for Rye Lane businesses which would incentivise them to give info). This would help to improve collaboration and communication but would have to be very fluid and also would only work if they felt safe sharing information in such a way. Research wholesalers that traders and shops buy their goods from, exploring potential for returning packaging and it being reused.</p>

Long Term	– where we want to be in two years?
Visual	<p>1. A Town Centre where rubbish does not build up but is regularly dealt with discretely.</p> <p>A streamlined townscape where recycling and waste has defined spaces but does not take over.</p>
Mechanical	<p>3. More waste reused or recycled; less general waste collected.</p> <p>4. Time-banded windows for waste collection in clear locations that do not interfere with flow of people in the Town Centre.</p> <p>5. Joined up and rationalised waste collection services replacing a myriad of contractors and waste streaming.</p>

	5. Potentially a (staffed) local waste collection point to take pressure and waste away from the Town Centre area.
Human	6. People feeling that they know and understand how to deal with their recycling and waste. 7. A strategic direction and joined up thinking with the council and local stakeholders working together led by a stakeholder management group.

Final Thoughts and Conclusions

In our initial brief, we said that the report will provide businesses with the information to help them to make informed choices, and provide information for new and improved services. The research that we commissioned took a deeper look at the complexity of issues leading to the issues of waste within the Town Centre; resulting in awareness that there are no quick fixes but the need for a culture shift among all stakeholders. From this we have developed a list of ways to start to tackle the issue of waste in the Town Centre from all sides.

We remain actively committed to working on this issue following this report and as such we would present a beginning of this process rather than an end. We hope that members of the council, employed and elected will work closely with us to improve the waste situation of Peckham Town Centre.

We will be publishing this report through our usual communications channels after we have delivered it to the Council. We will be encouraging all stakeholders in the town centre to give us feedback and will be seeking discussion with the Council on appropriate action.

Copeland Park. Peckham Vision 2016

Cleaner Peckham Project

**Waste:
Thinking differently,
acting differently,
getting different results**

March 2016

Francisco Calafate-Faria and Luna Glucksberg

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Waste: Thinking differently, acting differently, getting different results

The present report results from a community led initiative by Copeland Park, Peckham Vision and Rye Lane Trader's Association seeking a more integrated approach to the problem of waste in Peckham Town Centre. It was funded by Southwark Council's High Street Challenge Scheme and contributes to a new strategy for a cleaner Peckham.

Peckham has a problem with waste. Waste is a problem in Peckham. It is difficult to find statements that people can get behind wholeheartedly, especially in diverse, multicultural and multi-ethnic communities undergoing the sort of intense, rapid changes that Peckham is going through. And yet, the fact that waste is a problem in Peckham unites older and established communities, newcomers, professional middle classes, residents of poorer estates, shopkeepers, market traders, shoppers from near and far, council officers and elected representatives.

This was the big, overarching narrative that we found. The realisation that waste is a problem is only the first step, of course. As soon as we tried to unravel it myriad splinters of blame appeared: whose fault is it? Everyone and every group we spoke to had theories, arguments, grudges and, crucially, strong hopes or resentful pessimism in future improvements.

It is crucial that everyone wanted things to change and get better; there is huge potential in this energy. We did not meet with apathy. We found anger at times, that could almost be mistaken for aggression; we found frustration – from having to walk through rubbish, from being fined without understanding why, from losing sleep over how to solve this seemingly impossible puzzle – but not indifference.

The facts that waste is perceived as a problem and that the people of Peckham want to solve it form the backdrop of this report. The innovation that we bring is in our approach: we are not interested in apportioning or establishing blame, or siding with specific groups. Rather we have collected people's opinions and our own observations to create different, powerful narratives showing how change can be achieved if we think differently about the issue of waste.

Waste is a problem, and the people of Peckham want it to be solved. To find ways of addressing this issue we have collected people's opinions and our own observations in order to shift to narratives that may allow change to be achieved. For that to happen we need to think differently about waste and promote different ways of thinking about waste. By changing the way we think, we can act differently and, crucially, achieve better results than those that have been aimed and missed in the past.

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Preamble: Peckham in its own words

It is important to consider the broader context in which this study was set, the structural issues that form the specific Peckham is going through at the moment, and the things that matter most to the majority of its people.

During the research carried out for this project, Peckham Vision set up a meeting to discuss the future of Peckham. These are some field notes we took during the open mike discussion, showing the main worries of the people who spoke.

“1) Woman, BME: Peckham is being gentrified, like Brixton and Hackney: what about the black people?

2) Man, BME. Regeneration, disenfranchisement of lower income people. Aylesbury

3) Woman, White: Housing?

4) Man, BME: regeneration plans, bringing money into the area, but for whom? People are being priced out. Black community is an important part of Peckham.

5) Man, white: Who cares about station development? What about housing?

6) Man, BME: why so many changes all at once? Growth should not be finance led.

7) Man: redevelopment = making money for themselves. Aylesbury, homes were lost, corruption, Heygate, 73% cut on youth budget. Social cleansing of the estates.

8) Woman, BME: Information gaps, information bridges, learn from each other to fight better.

9) Woman, BME: what about the schools?”

These interventions carried on for two hours; the meeting hosted between 100 and 200 people on a week night, and was so full at times that people could literally not get into the room. The meeting continued into the night. What was clear was the crucial importance of housing, regeneration and gentrification in people’s minds. Whichever way they framed them, these issue were the most important ones, accompanied by fears of relocation, unaffordability, evictions, demolition and social/ethnic cleansing on the part of council, developers and speculators.

The issues discussed in the Future of Peckham meeting are not within the remit of our report, and will not be addressed by it: however, we feel it is important to acknowledge that they are the things that are at the forefront of people’s minds in Peckham, way above waste and cleanliness issues.

However, the very real fears of being excluded, evicted or somehow pushed out of the area do intersect with our work on waste, in the simple fact that although people want Peckham to be cleaner they do not want to make it clean for others who will take their place. For any waste strategy to be successful, it will need to acknowledge and address the anxieties that people, especially tenants and those at the lowest end of the socio-economic spectrum, feel around their own vulnerability in terms of being able to stay in place, to remain in Peckham and to see Peckham maintain the richness of its diversity.

INTRODUCTION

Setting the scene: the problem with waste in Peckham

“There are lots of places, like by Peckham Rye station, in front of Lloyds TSB bank, that are simply too tight and there is not enough space for people, buggies and rubbish. No space for pedestrians to go, you risk falls because of the rubbish in the road, especially rotting fruit and vegetables. The boxes that people pile up instead of folding up melt in the rain and then everything falls out and spills onto the road”
Restaurant owner, Peckham Town Centre

The words quoted above encapsulate many of the narratives that are commonly heard when asking people about waste in Peckham. To begin with it focuses on **Rye Lane**. This project looked at the entirety of Peckham town centre, but Rye Lane is clearly the crucial axis that polarises people’s opinions about waste and concentrates the most critical manifestations of the local problem with irregular waste disposal.

Secondly, it highlights the **conflicts in space usage** – people, buggies and rubbish – and the fundamental issue of lack of space for all of the activities that are supposed to take place in this location: a bus stop, the exit of a busy train station, market stalls, shops, a bank and pedestrian flow, to name but a few.

Thirdly, it brings up waste as **danger**. In fact, piles of waste throughout Rye Lane form traps where you may fall over, as well as harbouring processes of putrefaction and contamination, which are, by implication, polluting and disgusting. What is more the waste falls out and spills out. In many of our interviews we found a common sensitivity to the uncontrollable nature of waste, as if it had a life of its own at odds with human life.

Finally, and just as important, as soon as it is mentioned, waste immediately invites processes of **blame**: in this case the quote came from a restaurant owner, who was clearly putting the blame on the market traders for their boxes full of rotten fruit and vegetables piled up high and left, allegedly, in the wrong places. But in many other cases we heard other groups blaming each other.

Let us begin with the idea of ‘the wrong places’. A classical definition of waste in the academic literature has it as ‘matter out of place’. What do we mean by that? Simply that waste is relational: the categorisation as ‘waste’ depends on other variables, place being a crucial one. For example, dirty contaminated cardboard inside a bin of general waste is only waste in a social environment where recycling of cardboard makes clean separate disposal of cardboard the clean approach.

Waste and dirt are then deeply linked to space and place and, we want to add, time. If the bins are out on the pavements outside people’s homes in the mornings before the council collects them, no one has a problem with it. If a household does not bring their bins back in and they remain on the pavement for days, then that is a problem.

What is more, waste and dirt are relational in another sense, that we are all to an extent familiar with but is worth making clear at this stage: what one may consider dirty may well be fully acceptable for another person. What brings disgust to some people – blood, for example – may be a delicacy to others, as in black pudding. In some cases, people push this idea to extremes by assuming that the consequences of problematic behaviour with waste disposal is a result of other people’s carelessness or perhaps ‘cultural’ acceptability of dirt. It is important to bear in mind these processes of attribution and how they need to be confronted with a dialogue that bridges different perceptions.

There are then three issues that shape and define waste, but all of them are ever changing: space, time, and people or social relations. This approach may seem over theoretical, or complicating what is common knowledge. However, as anyone who has tried to come up to a solution to waste in the past will be absolutely clear on, it is not just 'waste': it is what is put where, when it is put out, by whom, at what time, and where are they putting it exactly.

What we will do in this report is try and bring some clarity to these issues, without shunning the inherent complexity of the problem and of the context. The report looks at what is there at the moment, analyses it from our unique perspective and then looks at the future, for a new way to plan interventions.

We begin by describing: 1) the methodology we have used for this project.

We proceed then with describing 2) the situation as it is at the moment, both in terms of the physical and social landscapes of Peckham Town Centre, and the legislative frameworks that are in place around waste. This is our data. We describe in depth the types of waste that various groups produce and how they are collected, sorted and arranged.

We then 3) analyse the data using a structure that centres around the mechanical, social and design aspects of waste in Peckham Town Centre.

Finally, we shall look at 4) the future and consider a number of options that a future waste strategy in Peckham may want to consider.

1) METHODOLOGY

We used a mix methods approach to collect the data for this project. This decision was informed by the complexity of the waste issues in Peckham and the impossibility to extract meaningful information using only one methodology. Specifically, we employed:

- A survey (106 responses)
- 43 interviews
- Ethnographic observation
- Participant observation
- Comparative observation
- Video/photo ethnography

We designed a survey and delivered it both using an online platform and paper versions; in total we gathered 106 responses. We also conducted 43 semi-structured, ethnographic interviews with shopkeepers, residents, councillors and council officers, as well as waste management staff from truck drivers to supervisors and managers, both in the public and in the private sectors.

We deployed multi-sited ethnographic methods with intensive observations in the Rye Lane area, extending to Peckham High Street, Peckham Rye as well as the adjacent roads on the East and West, as well as some visits to comparable sites such as Ridley Road Market, Brixton Market, East Street Market and Walworth Road. We used participant observation by taking part in waste collection rounds around Peckham Town Centre. We also used visual ethnographic methods, including photography and video recording, to capture situations and interactions.

We also made use of the background knowledge on waste and waste disposal issues we brought to this project from our previous experience both in Peckham and from the rest of London and other parts of the world.

As in any research project we used methods in a responsive way, adapting and changing our methodology to achieve our objectives. What is more, we learn from any obstacles and changes, considering them data in itself to be analysed.

In this case, we intended to conduct 'waste audits' in the businesses and homes of PTC, but realised as the research progressed that it was not a tool we could use at this time. The first responses we got to our initial survey started to make that clear. As we tried to recruit businesses to collaborate in the audit, an important part of the relations around waste was revealed. Our various approaches were all under the perspective of a researcher ultimately producing a result to be communicated to the council which is perceived as an adversarial agent. The lack of openness, transparency and ultimately trust around waste, coupled with a pronounced fear of fines, enforcements and legal threats is in and of itself significant, and has since informed the methods we did decide to use, as well as our analysis. Waste audits may be possible in Rye Lane at a different, future stage, with different resources dedicated to recruiting and retaining interested shopkeepers and market traders who may be willing to take part in it over a sustained period of time. Furthermore, they will require a new perception of collaboration and the deployment of a strategy of mediation. Towards the end of this report this point will become clearer.

On the other hand, various methodological approaches that were not included in the initial plan were deployed in order to respond to developments in the field: these included more intense liaising with the steering group, more engagement with waste collectors and municipal officials, participation in community events, ethnographic

observation and mobile methods aimed at following materials and establishing comparisons with other locations. The results of this responsive, multi-method approach was a rich, in-depth representation of the present situation, together with the identification of mechanic, social and design dimensions of the waste issues in Peckham, as detailed in the analytic side of this report.

2) THINGS AS THEY ARE

Socio-economic geography

Peckham Town Centre is a loosely defined area focused around Rye Lane and Peckham Rye station, including many streets to the east and west of this street as well as, at the northern end, Peckham High Street and towards the southern end the north part of Peckham Rye.

Rye Lane stretches on a North - South axis, with the station, Peckham Rye, roughly in the middle of it. The station is an important part of Peckham. The station is also symbolically important in dividing the northern, more estate dominated side of Peckham from the much more affluent side of the area that then becomes Peckham Rye, Nunhead and East Dulwich, much more affluent areas of the borough compared to the north of Peckham.

There is also a noticeable difference in the shops from the north – much more chain dominated – side of Rye Lane to the smaller and independent, albeit popular, shops in the southern side of Rye Lane. An exception has to be made for the up and coming businesses concentrating at the Peckham Rye end which serve a very specific, well off, young and middle class clientele.

The other geographical differences to consider once again centre around Rye Lane but this time stretch from east to west. The western side of the Town Centre faces towards Bellenden Road, with its Victorian houses and boutique shops, restaurant and gastro pubs, while the eastern side is again much more dominated by estates and purpose built social housing, and generally much less affluent residents.

Finally, especially in the context of this study it is important to consider the role of the markets and market stalls in Peckham Town Centre, which have a long history of providing a service to both local and incoming shoppers. Choumert Road Market, to the south, is a long lasting area of market stalls, although it has been scattered around the area in the last 5 years, as are the stalls in front of the Peckham Plex cinema, themselves also undergoing processes of change.

The area of Rye Lane has also undergone, according to many interviews, processes of transfer of market traders into shops open to the high street. In those shops, there is also a complex and variable geometry with various shops and networks overlapping in the same contiguous floor, neighbouring multinational and national chains, independent shopping malls and shops that are linked to market stalls. The transfer between market stalls and shops as a long tradition in the Rye Lane and is epitomized by the success story of the large supermarket Khan Bargains, whose owner started with a small stall in front of the station. This diverse and fluid economic geography has implications in the applicability of a rigid and complex structure of waste permissions and categories outlined by the law. This will be described below.

Legal frame of local waste disposal and collection

Despite the appearance of indiscriminate disposal, waste in Peckham town centre is meant to be segregated, not so much by materials, containers, and sites, but rather by types of producers and, in the case of commercial waste, private contracted collectors. The following table presents a breakdown of the types of waste producer, the collection services that can collect their waste, the materials that are collected separately, and the opportunities for more recycling and reuse.

Table 1 types of waste producers, types of waste and opportunities for recycling

types of producers	collectors	Materials collected separately	Opportunities for recycling
businesses (commercial waste)	Businesses have to contract commercial waste collection (main companies operating in the area: Veolia ¹ , Biffa, ByWaters, WMR, Jordan ² , First Mile, RTS, ACE, Grays, Sita, Cory, Paper round, and other unspecified companies were referred by interviewees ³)	general waste pallets food waste package recycling	Food waste and cardboard can be recycled. Cooking oil. Most of the package form deliveries, especially pallets, are thrown away.
Residents	Veolia, on behalf of the council, bulky waste collection	general waste co-mingled package, bulky waste	Many residents don't have recycling collection services
Market traders	Council streets services; local charities and some scavengers also collect some of the food leftovers	Food waste General waste Cardboard	Compost Food leftovers More cardboard
fly-tippers/litter pickers/street sweepers/commercial cardboard	council streets services	general waste, bulky items, cardboard (from commercial waste)	Furniture reuse scheme, collection of objects, scrap store, museum of rubbish
construction sites	Specific collection service must be arranged	Construction materials	

¹ Veolia is the provider with the highest share of commercial contracts. They have several national, regional and local contracts apart from being the main beneficiary of the agreement they made for a 5-year retreat of the council from commercial waste services. The agreement is finishing now.

² Jordan is owned by a former council worker who created the company after this contract was signed.

³ the unspecified companies were mentioned to us by business managers and employees. We heard several names always with the guarantee that they are licensed contractors.

Each of the waste producers have the obligation to dispose of their waste correctly. This means storing and disposing waste at the right place in the right container in the right manner at the right time. The information about what to do is not always easy to find, and it is at times contradicted by what actually happens on the ground. Many in Peckham Town Centre simply follow what others say or simply what they observe as general practice. Let us start by describing what ought to happen for each of the types of waste producers, how is information communicated, and how regulations are enforced.

Residential waste

In the borough of Southwark, waste produced by private homes is collected by Veolia under a contract signed with the council in 2008. Veolia does not provide separate recycling collection to all homes in Peckham Town centre. In some areas, where there are no storage facilities, waste has to be placed on the street in bags provided by Veolia on behalf of the council. Information about collection times in each area is provided in the Southwark council website for each specific postcode search. We have had reports of difficult access to waste disposal areas and difficulty in getting Veolia to agree on changes in the collection arrangements to improve cleanliness (see section on spaces rhythms and circulation below).

Homes can also dispose of bulky items but, in recent times, they have to pay separately for the service. According to council workers, the change, which dates back only a few months, has implied a higher volume of fly-tipping of bulky waste in the area.

Commercial Waste

Businesses have a “duty of care” over the waste they produce. This means that they are responsible for the waste that results from their activities, from its production until the moment they give it to a licensed waste business. They are also responsible for the way their contracted waste collection provider deals with the waste they produce. They also have the obligation to report any mishandling by their provider or by other businesses. This means that if a waste contractor misses an agreed collection slot it is the responsibility of the waste producer to report their contractor.

So in practice every business in Peckham Town Centre must have a contract with a waste provider, which specifies the amount of waste they produce and the types of materials that are collected separately as well as the times of collection. Under the contract the business typically pays a price for a number of bags or for a lift of a container of a defined capacity. These bins and bags must be identified and the business is required by law to acquire enough adequate containers for all the waste it produces.

In the area of PTC businesses may hold national, regional and local contracts with waste service providers. This is the difference between shops like Natwest, or MacDonalds, and local shops such as Khan’s. Businesses such as a shopping centre (e.g. Rye Lane Market and Sky City) may have a contract with a waste service provider that includes all the shops that operate in its premises. On the other hand, some of the proprietors that sublet parts of their space may have in their space various separate contracts for each of the shops that operate in their space (e.g. UK food store). Both situations create difficulties issues of operation as well as enforcement.

Businesses can get information about how to deal with their waste from various websites but not easily from the Southwark council’s website (see section on communication below). The council collects some of the waste they produce, mainly through informal arrangements and *de facto* illegal practices. The council collects

cardboard from businesses once per day. This scheme, created by the council in 2014, is in apparent contradiction with the regime of waste producer responsibility. Since this arrangement was put into place, what happens in fact is that businesses developed the habit of bringing out cardboard every time the council street cleaning team passes by the front of the shops in Rye Lane. This cardboard naturally ends up in the general waste compactor vehicle.

Market trade waste

Market trade waste is collected by the council's street services. Collection times and regulations were communicated to the traders in 2014 in a meeting attended by enforcement agents and traders. In that meeting a letter dated from 2010 was distributed to the traders. Cardboard collection started soon after and the implications of the new arrangements were communicated through informal channels. Traders must put out their waste for collection only as early as half hour before each of two daily time-slots of one hour each, and all waste must be contained in trade waste bags. All cardboard must be folded and taped or tied with a string. In many cases, folded and taped cardboard goes into the general waste compactor if placed out in the morning, as we observed when we accompanied the dustcart round. (This happened in PTC but also in Queens Road and in Lordship Lane). In most cases waste and cardboard is just piled up outside the stalls for collection.

Street waste collection

Apart from market trade waste and cardboard for recycling, the council street vehicles collect the bin liners that are removed and placed on the sidewalk by the litter pickers, next to the bins where they originate. The time bands for general waste collection are 8.30–9.30 and 16.00–17.00, from Monday to Saturday, but litter pickers have to empty bins throughout the day. In the morning, the dustcart collection also comes by Rye Lane on the way back to the Veolia waste disposal centre at about 12.00. This creates another opportunity to empty the street from the piles of rubbish formed after its first passage. However, it is also another opportunity for waste disposal on the street as disposal habits tend to follow collection rhythms. There is also a dust collection in the night and two additional collections on Sunday.

The street teams collect everything they come across on the street, which includes fly-tipping, bags of commercial waste labelled for collection by waste businesses, several types of fly-tipping, including many pallets in Rye lane and a good quantity of construction waste. The only things they leave behind are some bulky items, especially those with metallic and electric components.

In the afternoon there is a cardboard collection service which can also be used by the other businesses in the area.

According to a study carried out in May 2015, which for a week weighted the trucks after collection in Rye Lane only, the street team collects about 8.2 tons of waste per day on average, including 0.5 tonnes of separated cardboard. The total capacity of the dustcart used in the day collection is of 12-14 tons so in fact what happens is that the waste of Rye Lane is driven up and down the whole round which includes Dulwich and Queens Road Peckham.

Enforcement

Compliance to these regulations is enforced by council officials who have the power to issue fines. Residents may be fined for fly-tipping whereas businesses may be fined for failing to show waste transfer notes provided by their contracted waste businesses and for disposing of waste in an inappropriate way, space or time. Senior officials as well as other workers in the council have complained about the reduced

number of officers available to enforce compliance as well as about the low level of fines which, they say, make it worthwhile for businesses to take their chances and reduce the number of bags purchased from their contractors to a minimum by replacing proper disposal by dumping.

Enforcement officials often walk behind the dustcart in order to catch the businesses who bring out their waste to be collected by the dust cart. They are also called when a resident is identified by the contents of a bag or a bulky object illegally dumped on the street.

Enforcement is crucial to the perception of the role of the council in the waste management process as an agent of surveillance and punishment.

Hotspots

Hotspots where waste and fly-tipping accumulates are both visible and in people's way (fuelled by knowledge of regular indiscriminate collection) and hidden in particular backstreet spots (contributing to the destruction and sense of abandonment of some important public spaces in the town centre.

We identified are 3 types of such problematic points, which are abused by various groups:

Market trader collection points

E.g. Highshore Rd, Choumert rd, under the railway bridge



Figure 1 Dustcart collection in Rye Lane near market stalls

Recycling points

E.g. Choumert Rd Car park, Peckham Rye.



Figure 2 Local recycling centre at Choumert Rd car park

Alleyways and hidden or less used spaces

E.g. Bournemouth Close, Rye Lane entry to the Choumert Rd Car Park, Elm Grove, Nigel Rd.



Figure 3 Elm Grove, with the Rye Ln market bin and at the back a mattress and other dumped objects

Hotspots of problematic waste disposal from the surface of the issue of problematic waste disposal and often invite simplistic sweeping proposals. Yet they are simply the symptoms of a complex problem that needs to be addressed with an integrated and sustainable approach. In the next sections we pull apart three crucial dimensions of the problem.

3) DIMENSIONS OF A COMPLEX PROBLEM: MECHANIC, HUMAN AND DESIGN

The previous section outlined the social and economic geography of Peckham town centre, with Rye Lane as main axis, and the legal and operational framework of waste management. Much of the persistence and recurrence of the problem of waste and dirt in public space ensues from the conflicts between these two aspects. Firstly, an area where the structure of commercial occupation of space is fluid, multileveled, and interchanging, creates a problematic relationship with the legal categorisation of waste producers, especially between trade waste and commercial waste. Secondly, an urban layout where many homes do not have waste storage facilities and have to put their waste in bin bags on the street alongside commercial and trade waste generates confusion and invites fly-tipping. Finally, we have to consider the material aspects of a very diverse, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic high street, which is often overlooked. An area where many businesses provide fresh produce, transported from many distant parts of the world, at accessible prices, necessarily produces large amounts of waste in the form of packaging materials and food waste. Whereas most deliveries usually take place whilst most people are asleep, the by-products of the deliveries and trade tend to accumulate throughout the day alongside the intensification of footfall and traffic. A logic of reverse logistic needs to be introduced in order to make sure that the movement of materials may ensure a cleaner Peckham.

The problem becomes obvious in the eyes of everyone when it is concentrated in hotspots, which were classified at the end of the previous section. But the ramifications of the waste problem are deeper and more complex generating a sense of powerlessness, ad-hoc partial solutions, and the calls for simplistic 'quick fixes' which only contribute to the perpetuation of the problem and to the narrowing of the possibilities of solution.

Our data suggest that only an integrated solution that addresses the problem under a strategic and collaborative perspective involving the largest possible part of the population who use, live and work in PTC can be successful and sustainable. However the complexity of the problem can be overwhelming and discourage attempts to tackle its various dimensions. In this section we propose a way of making this complexity manageable and intelligible so that an integrated solution can be devised. We divide the issue of waste in its 3 main dimensions: mechanical, social, and design.

The mechanical dimension

Firstly, an efficient system of waste management will have to consider the mechanical dimension, by which we mean the technical, practical and logistical issues involved in the management of waste. There needs to be an integrated mechanism that deploys force and movement to transport materials that have no value or may be harmful for human life, at an appropriate pace, away from the spaces where people live, trade, and circulate. This is particularly critical in an area like Peckham Town Centre where large amounts of waste materials are generated at the same time as intense trade and circulation occur, bearing in mind that waste collection itself contributes to the intensity of circulation in the area and may produce wasteful outcomes.

The mechanical dimension of the problem of waste management can be divided in two parts. To the first one we call "spaces, rhythms and circulation"; to the second, we call "materials and containment".

Spaces, rhythms and circulation

Stages and spaces

Waste management requires the existence of at least two stages before removal. We can call those stages: 1 - storage and 2 - presentation for collection. Those stages define specific spaces. In Peckham town centre, especially in the areas adjacent to Rye Lane, businesses, shops, and users of the public space have a variety of arrangements and spaces to proceed to these steps.



Figure 4 North of Peckham Rye, street bin, bin liner, unidentified rubbish bags and a commercial bin behind it

For residents there are several areas in Rye Lane and to its South and East, where storage facilities are either non-existent or inadequate. The lack of a space to keep a wheelie bin makes the situation of many homes very different from those of other parts of Peckham Town centre (notably to the West of Rye Lane) where houses have individual or enclosed collective facilities. This promotes disposal behaviours which are often condemned as irresponsible or illegal but are simply a product of unequal situations and logistics. The North end of Peckham Rye, continuing through the South end of Rye Lane, with its present intense activity of construction work and new businesses moving in, is an area where many houses do not have appropriate waste storage facilities.

An interesting and problematic example concerns the Atwell Estate. For a long time, the street cleaning team tried to get Veolia, who runs the residential waste collection in the whole of Southwark, to place a container for the residential waste in Bournemouth Close, where two of the most used entries to the estate are situated. The reason was that because there is only one place in the estate that stores the waste of the residents, a large proportion of the residents would have to go out of their ways to use those facilities. The result was the accumulation of rubbish bags on Bournemouth Close (see blue bags on the right hand side of the first image below).



The problem was inviting more fly tipping and the situation got so difficult for the street cleaning team that they decided to act. They found three wheelie bins and placed them at the Bournemouth Close entries to the estate (the second image below shows one of those entries with the new container. According to the waste collectors and their supervisor, the situation improved immensely and although they are only meant to collect sacks and other objects from the streets and not to lift bins, this solution made things much better for this particularly problematic hotspot. This also means that the council is in fact doing the job of Veolia, but it is just one example of the many occasions where partial fixes had to be found to address a situation where no one was responsible for an integrated strategic vision that defined the best spaces for the necessary stages of waste removal.



Figure 5 Bournemouth Close in December 2015 and then in February 2016

In the case of commercial waste, the situation is naturally even more atomized. With each business responsible for developing solutions for its own waste, informality and creativity is also incentivised. The situation is made more complex by the particular social and economic geography described in the previous section of this report. Indoor storage facilities are difficult to manage inside multi-layered commercial spaces. Thus businesses come up with solutions such as shopping trolleys chained outside their premises or small tents made with pieces of tarpaulin (see image below). Contrary to many common ideas about the behaviour of owners and employees of commercial businesses in Rye Lane, most of them do not display a careless or lazy attitude. In fact, we could observe that they make considerable efforts to keep their front door as clean as possible, even when their actions are irregular. Shopkeepers move waste to different places often to dump it irregularly and they assist the dust collectors and sweep the public space when they pass. The

problem is exactly that the old aphorism that says that if everybody sweeps around their own front door the world would be clean is inadequate to the present challenges of waste management. The move towards shared spaces and shared stages of waste removal and streaming is crucial. In the next section about materials, this will become more clear.



Figure 6 different ways of storing waste outside a shop

In the case of market traders there is a common practice of storing waste under and around the stalls in an indiscriminate way until the next collection. In the case of the cardboard collection, the waste collectors have usually to make the effort of sorting through mixed waste types in order to separate the cardboard that is good for recycling.

Rhythms of disposal and rhythms of collection

Collection times have been the same for at least 15 years and have not accompanied the extension in hours of trade in PTC. Businesses now operate until 9 or 10 o'clock in the evening.

Furthermore, there is a clear problem in the coincidence between the increased traffic and footfall between 4-5, when the highest volume of school children, commuters, buses, and after-work shoppers, the collection vehicles and the most intense piles of rubbish on the street.



Figure 7 Southwark council cardboard collection

Circulation

In the morning, the dustcart passes twice along Rye Lane. It covers a circuit that starts in Queens Road and continues through Dulwich, Lordship Lane, Rye Lane before doing another hour west of Rye Lane before passing by at 12 again.

According to the audit done by the council in a low season, Rye Lane produces an average of 8 tons a day collected by trucks that take up around 12-14 tons, depending on the materials. What happens then is that the compactor truck drives the Rye Lane waste through its circuit before taking it to Veolia waste centre in Old Kent Road. Five years ago, when the market was concentrated in Choumert Rd, there was a cardboard compactor in the corner of Alpha Street which was fed by council workers throughout the trading hours. The compactor was removed when the learning centre was created in the place and the market was slowly dismantled. It is possible to think that Rye Lane and the adjacent roads could feed one or more stationary compactors rather than having it circulating through the roads across the borough, especially if some of the commercial waste could be included.

Various businesses and organisations complained that their waste contractors often miss scheduled collections, in some cases allowing their bins to be left outside inviting fly-tipping and fines from the council enforcement officers. In these cases the responsibility is all on the business and the weight often falls on the council collection teams who have to collect the trade bags paid to private companies.



Figure 8 dustcart operators collecting folded cardboard and bags of Veolia trade waste in the morning round.

Materials and containment



Figure 9 - a woman collecting food from a pile of market trade waste at the corner of Highshore rd. A tray of tomatoes was placed carefully there by the market trader to allow collection.

There is an enormous potential to increase recycling in PTC. Strategies for the diversification of waste streams through the implementation of circuits of recycling and reuse, combined with systems of separation and containment at the point of production can guarantee the generation of economic, social and environmental value. Improved recycling can also contribute to alleviate the pressure over the volume and contaminated nature of the piles of material that accumulate at the moment at many of the hotspots listed above. Recycling can generate value for charitable and community projects, depending on the types of waste. Let's take a look at some of those materials in turn.

Cardboard

At the moment cardboard is the only recyclable material collected in the whole of Peckham Town Centre. Cardboard is a highly recyclable material, it is abundant and it is very compactable. According to the exercise carried out in May 2015, the council team collects an average of 0.6 tons of cardboard per day, from Monday to Saturday. A great part of this amount is produced by businesses who were told that they could put out cardboard for collection at 16.00. Yet, as we observed on several occasions and confirmed during a round with the dustcart, the amount of cardboard collected with the general waste, and therefore not recycled, is at least as much as the quantity that is collected by the cardboard truck. This cardboard that is not recycled is collected in the morning from the shop fronts of many businesses that have developed the habit of bringing it out for collection whenever a collection truck passes, and from the markets stalls' waste collection points where cardboard from different origins accumulates. Finally there is a considerable amount of cardboard that is mixed with food waste and thus becomes unavailable for recycling. The amount of recycled cardboard in the area could be easily doubled if the capacity of collection was increased, with another round of the cardboard truck. An even better solution would be the creation of a small recycling centre in the local area that could compact and store cardboard, contributing to recycling and removing high volumes of material from the street. This could be done through compactors, but it could also be possible to use balers provided that there is an enclosed space available.

Food waste

Various residents, business owners and traders showed interest in contributing to streams of food waste recycling and reuse. There is in Peckham a hub of *foodcycle* which collects food surplus from traders and supermarkets and organises a weekly community dinner at All Saints Church. Some of the market traders dispose leftover vegetables and fruits in cardboard containers so as to allow scavengers to pick through (see image above). An owner of an African food shop told us that they take the leftover cooked food to give it to people in need in their area of residence and that they would welcome a local scheme of leftover collection. Various local residents, both in response to our survey and in face-to-face interviews complained about the non-existence of food waste collection for compost.

There is a real opportunity for improvement here, but, due to the nature of food waste, it is absolutely critical that there are spaces for contained storage and that regular collection is guaranteed. In particular the amount of raw vegetables thrown away everyday by market traders makes the perspective of a community composting a real opportunity to divert an important waste stream and engage the local businesses.

Package Materials

If we look at the contents of a recycling bin in a domestic setting, we will see that, with the exception of paper, it is almost entirely composed by packaging and wrapping materials. In urban settings, where food is transported long distances until it reaches our homes, homes tend to produce large amounts of waste from packaging of consumer products. At the commercial level, especially in the kinds of food shops displaying open produce that we see in street markets and in many of the shops in Rye Lane, the amount of waste produced through this way is even higher. That's why every morning on Rye Lane, wrappings and packaging of various kinds are cut open to unbox the various kinds of yam, exotic fruits, herbs, fresh fish, dry fish, fresh meat, canned food, and all the products that make the area attractive for its diversity. Many of those materials can be recycled, provided that they are separated from the food they carry and transported as soon as possible to a place where they can be washed and reprocessed.

It became clear throughout our research that the commercial contracts offered by the waste businesses do not provide sufficient incentive for recycling of those materials. And yet this kind of waste occupies an enormous volume of space and can hardly be sacked or binned alongside and at the same price as other types of waste. Furthermore, in Rye Lane, we can see supermarkets with national contracts of waste disposal have metal grids at the front of their shops where package can be stored for recycling, whereas next door, a food store producing high volumes of packaging would have to bag their recycling and pay for it the same price as general waste. For independent shops in PTC the present situation of individual waste contracts does not provide incentive to recycle packaging, which helps to explain why it is nearly non-existent except for large mainly national and multinational businesses.

Pallets

According to the members of the street teams, an average of 100 wooden pallets are collected by the dustcart every week in and around Rye Lane. They are a permanent feature of the urban landscape of PTC and form an important part of the waste that clutters the public spaces in the area. Pallets are brought in with goods deliveries every morning and are left on the pavements once the loads are taken into the shops. We came across at least three different attempts at giving an after life to waste pallets.

1- a recent exhibition at Peckham Platform, called “Doing Nothing is not an Option” (September-November 2015), which focus on environmental issues, displayed an installation built with wooden pallets. The pallets were sourced in a local supplier in Consort Rd.

2- Peckham Pallets and cases, a supplier located in Consort Rd, sells pallets at cheap rates, many of which are reused

3- South London Makers, a Peckham-based company that designs and builds wooden furniture have in the past developed projects of garden furniture built out of recycled pallets.

There is extensive information available online about ways to find creative uses to waste pallets and there is some local experience and possible resources to fund projects that can use the local availability of this material. For example, the Highshore School in Camberwell has recently been awarded a small grant by Veolia to develop a Pallet reuse project. However it is important to note that if recycling waste pallets in Peckham represents an opportunity to generate all sorts of value (social, economic, pedagogic or artistic), the solution to the problem of unwanted pallets in the streets of Peckham can only be effectively tackled with the development of sustainable circuits of reduction, and recirculation for the same purposes, coupled with the attribution of responsibility for reverse logistics to waste producers at various levels of the supply chain. This means that the suppliers of produce and the collection of unwanted pallets for recirculation cannot be completely replaced by schemes that place all the duty of care on the commercial activity at the high-street level. This is also applicable to plastic package materials.

Cooking oil

There are several businesses that produce significant quantities of used cooking oil, such as chicken and chips shops, cafes, and other food related companies. Used cooking oil is highly recyclable into biodiesel, whilst disposing it down the drains or into normal waste bags can have very damaging consequences. Like it happens with other waste materials, there is information available about companies that provide free collection services of used cooking oil. Yet, they usually demand that businesses accumulate at least one hundred litres which poses operational difficulties. Waste collection workers complain about the fact that some shops dispose of their waste oil into normal rubbish bags creating problems with leakage with potential danger for road traffic.

Glass

Glass cullet loses much value in recycling processes but can be turned into construction materials. There is not much economic incentive for private contractors to collect it separately. Yet the prevalence of waste glass on the high street or in rubbish bags poses serious health and safety threats to pedestrians, traffic and especially waste workers. There is not enough sensitization for the dangers of improper disposal of glass and there is a lack of disposal facilities for waste glass in the Rye Lane area. This is particularly important at night time where the intense recreational activity in the area often includes drinking bottles of alcohol in the public space. At night time there is a profusion of glass bottles spread out by the town centre which are then collected by the street cleaning services.

Other Materials

Waste collection workers and businesses complained about other sorts of waste materials that are not amenable to recycling: pigeon fouling (there is a notice

between Elm Grove and Holly Grove that threatens bird feeders with fines of up to 2000 pounds, but that fails to deter people from doing it) and dog fouling. Night-time waste (takeaway food containers and leftovers) also poses particular challenges to the cleanliness of the public spaces putting pressure on the cleaning services at night and on weekends. Some residents have also complained about the spread of certain forms of human waste originating in the many hairdressers and nail shops in the area.

Other waste materials potentially usable

Finding new destinations for waste materials and objects can also serve purposes of raising awareness to the problem of waste, even when the impact on cutting down waste streams that threaten the public space is limited. As we talked with several local artists and craftspeople, who make or have made use of waste materials, we came across the lack of structures to make certain materials such as textiles, pallets, and used objects available for whoever wants to use them. Following examples from other places and contingent to the availability of building spaces and human resources in the area, ideas such as a Scrap Store and/or a Museum of Rubbish could be ways of filling that gap.

In this section we listed opportunities for potential uses and circuits to different materials generated in PTC. Taking up recycling opportunities can alleviate the amount of material that is wasted and ends up on the streets at the same time as it can generate value for the local community. Increase in recycling of waste from the streets of Peckham needs to be accompanied by various strategies to find destination and ways of storing and often scaling up material for recycling and reuse. At the moment it is left to the individual businesses to pursue those opportunities and there is real opportunity and need to develop mechanisms of articulation between businesses in order to find ways of containing and storing materials for recycling streams. Wooden pallets, used cooking oil and food for compost are examples of existing opportunities to be taken up by community organisations. Glass is an example of a material that needs to be taken out of the general waste stream but the value for recycling is low, therefore there is a need of a public incentive for that to happen. The mechanical system considered in this section can only be thought of in conjunction with the understanding of the human infrastructure which exists in PTC with its difficulties, needs and potential. This is what we will analyse in the following section.

The Human infrastructure

The effort to think of possible solutions to a system for Rye Lane as a whole may help engage all stakeholders in a fruitful collaborative process of change. Yet, any changes to the mechanical system or even any partial attempts at implementing creative solutions tend to depart from the assumption that the people in Peckham, be they residents, visitors or those who work in the local businesses, are unable to collaborate willingly to a cleaner Peckham and will have to be forced into it by fines and surveillance. This section on the human dimension of the waste problem in Peckham Town Centre will focus on the problems that contribute to that view but also on the potential to overcome it.

Waste is inherently a social category, as we have seen in the introduction to this report. It is also relational: defining something as 'waste' only makes sense with respect to and in the context of a specific place and interaction. In the case of PTC, for example, material objects can move from being packaging to waste to fly-tipping very quickly, depending on where they are and who is assessing them, at what time of the day. All of this in a relatively small area, where rents are rising – a clear sign that even more people want to be there – and visitors are increasing, especially since the coming of the Overground. Under these conditions waste management is expectably problematic. What we look at in the following sections are the prevailing narratives we have found from different groups around waste in PTC, some predictable and some less so.

Blame and disgust: they are disgusting and it's all their fault

There were other things that we found that were not, however, quite so predictable and yet have a huge impact on how waste is and, crucially, could be managed. At the beginning of this report we focused on the idea of blame: different groups blaming each other and expressing very strong views of what should be done about it. In their own voices:

"The amount of litter is appalling. I've lived all over London and can't think of another place that's as bad. Why there aren't more bins for waste is beyond me. It's about time the council took action as I'm genuinely embarrassed to invite friends to Peckham at times."

Resident of Peckham Town Centre

"It is disgusting, the Rye Lane retailers don't seem to have any consideration or respect."

Peckham resident

"General lack of respect for our environment by the local shop owners is the problem. They see 'their' waste as someone else's problem."

Visitor/Shopper

Our data suggested a meaningful division could be made into four broad categories, all tending to push blame to the others:

- Residents
- The council
- Visitors/Shoppers
- Traders/Shopkeepers

The first thing we need to note is that these categories are fluid and should only be intended as framing devices, and tools to advance the discussion. Residents are often also shoppers, shopkeepers and market traders may well be residents, and are likely to be shoppers themselves. Finally, it is not possible to realistically categorise an organization as complex as 'the council' under one simple label, not to mention the fact that councillors and council officers may well be residents, visitors and shoppers themselves. What is more, there is much that is missing from these categories, like the staff that deal with waste daily, the council officers and employees who work with it. Furthermore, there is a category of people that are perceived to come from outside of the local area to solve the problems that the local population is perceived to be unable to solve. We can count here the myriad of experts, researchers, consultants, artists, NGO's and one may add, waste management companies. But even this category is fluid. For example, many of those experts, or the people who work for them may be local or become local in the course of their work. Another example is that of one of the private waste contractors which was founded by a former council waste worker who saw the opportunity when the funding cuts laid out personnel and the contract with Veolia opened up the commercial waste business.

We find the above categories useful however because people used them: they are what we would call 'emic' terms, the terms that the insiders of groups use to make sense of the world around them. It is standard practice for ethnographers to take into account these terms and the meanings that live within them, to truly understand how people feel and think about certain issues. If we want to change the ways in which people think about waste it is clearly necessary to understand how they think about it now, and what are the narratives they use to make sense of it?

- **The survey showed that residents in particular have a very strong negative perception in relation to local businesses**

Shop owners are seen as the group mostly responsible for the waste situation in Peckham Town Centre. They are followed closely by the council. In most of the interviews with business managers and owners, the council is clearly the most responsible for the dirt in Peckham Town centre.

Q2 Which of the following groups is most responsible for the cleanliness of Peckham Town Centre (order from 1 – most responsible to 5 – least responsible)?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 1

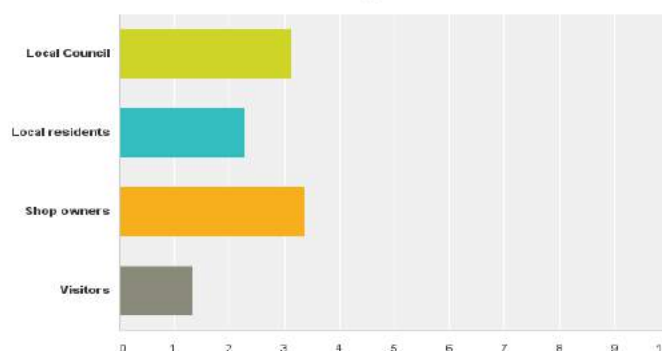


Chart 1 Attribution of responsibility for waste problem

Often survey respondents expressed their negative views on the attitudes of businesses in the high street in strong words.

One resident wrote:

It is disgusting, the Rye Lane retailers don't seem to have any consideration or respect.

Another one:

“General lack of respect for our environment by the local shop owners is the problem. They see 'their' waste as someone else's problem.”

And one more:

“Rye Lane is an embarrassment” and “traders need to take more responsibility”

On the other hand, business owners are harsh on their evaluation of the council role. A newsagent living in Peckham for 26 years refused to complete our survey affirming that she had absolutely no hope in any positive change if the council was involved. Another business manager, also a long term resident told us: “the council is absolutely useless. They don't respond to our calls when something happens and they have no capacity to solve the waste issue”

In view of some of the problems highlighted by businesses and residents, especially in interviews, it seems that any change that involves the local community coming together will have to overcome this existing barrier formed by these blame narratives.

Blame is clearly a strong narrative in place when the talk is waste; the other one that we found was that of disgust, something that is very often associated with waste and dirt. As we have seen the relational aspect of waste here comes into play very strongly. The senses are engaged fully when we talk about disgust, and often smell is an important signifier, as much as sight. Many shops in Rye Lane sell produce meat and fish from far flung locations around the world. The way these are displayed is not at all similar to the clean, almost sterile environments of supermarkets that many people would be accustomed to outside of Peckham, and this engenders strong reactions.

“Hair, fish and old fruit and cardboard. Having to step over dirty ice water that stinks every day when walking from the station means if I have time, I avoid it.”

A commuter

Blame and disgust are standard tropes in discussions on waste around the world, and we were not surprised by them. We were however rather taken aback by the way in which ‘the council’ was blamed – that is normal – but not seen as a leader in the effort to clean up the area. Since the privatization of waste management services - a dominant point in a key narrative that we picked up again and again – the council has lost its strategic role in leading the efforts to keep the area clean and is seen instead simply in an enforcement role, punishing, surveying and applying fines that are either too high – according to those who are fined – or too low, according to those in favour of ever stringent and more punishing enforcement measures.

A different story? We want to help but we don't know how

People across the spectrum and across all of the categories, in whichever location we picked, agreed that waste was a problem. They also overwhelmingly showed a deep interest in the issue and a willingness to be part of a change for the better.

However the confusion that reigned upon the way the waste management system worked meant very few, if at all, had any idea on how to make things better. Although they may not have had all the right permits, on our participant observation exercises on the waste trucks collecting on and around Rye Lane we noticed again and again people coming out and helping, trying to clean things up and dump rubbish in the truck or for the truck to pick up.

Shopkeepers were appalled at what they perceived as lack of communication on the part of the council as to what they were supposed to be doing. Some explained to us and produced evidence of having tried to engage with the council to receive training around appropriate waste management procedures. Bitterness and lack of trust followed this particular and unfortunate event, which was clearly a blow to a determined attempt by shopkeepers to be an active agent rather than simply victims of enforcement strategies.

Food outlets and restaurants in particular were very anxious about how the waste on the pavements mixed with fly-tipping impacted on the image of their businesses, especially since cleanliness was a basic requirement that customers would rightly expect if someone sold or served food. Many took part in the interviews enthusiastically and would have been only too happy to be part of the solution.

Market traders complained of other market traders lack of discipline in folding their boxes down ready for collection, just as commuters and residents did, but at the same time acknowledged the immense difficulty of complying with the system especially for newly arrived traders who knew nothing of the rules and were not at all guided by the council. They also remarked, together with the shopkeepers, on the high prices charged by waste removal companies as being significant disincentives in their efforts to clean and upkeep the area.

Residents whose only choice to dispose of their litter was placing it in bags next to the bins on Rye Lane, because their new flats lacked not only waste storage but also waste disposal facilities, were aware and appalled that what they were doing could effectively be seen as fly-tipping, and would most likely encourage others to dump their rubbish next to theirs. They would like to do things differently but do not feel they have much choice. One specified:

“I live in a maisonette, we have no compost/green waste, general waste goes down the shoot, our recycling bags are supposed to go on the street for collection, is what we’re told to do but I do not do it because it adds to the general feeling of messiness and uncared for area, so I take my recycling to the big containers myself rather than living it on the kerb”

Resident

Our research also showed that the perception of “the punitive council” could be easily reverted as many representatives of the council make daily efforts and go out of their way to find solutions and contribute to a cleaner Peckham. Often those efforts become part of the problem because like everybody else’s they are disconnected from a bridging and integrated strategy. But they represent an energy that can potentially be harnessed to start reverting negative perceptions and build a collaborative environment.

Our data clearly show that it would be wrong to stop at the usual narratives of blame and disgust. These narratives can be summarized as “Yes waste is a problem and it is usually caused by someone other than ‘us’”. However just as strong were much more hopeful and positive narratives of people who cared for the area, who wanted to help but were completely baffled by the impossibility to understand a complex and illegible system. These narratives literally shout “We care: how can we help?” and should be focused on just as much as the negative ones of blame and disgust.

- Whatever changes are implemented in the local waste management structure, they will have to rely on a rich and engaged human infrastructure. They will also need to be based on clear and intelligible systems of communication. The following section will focus on this issue.

The visual dimension



Figure 10 - a pedestrian, drops a bag over a pile of waste as he walks by. The bollard and the empty signal next to the pile seem redundant

The visual is a crucial element of waste management. This is evident in the preference for transparent recycling bags and gridded containers for commercial recycling. This also manifests in the fact that many public spaces in Peckham Town Centre that are concealed from the routine flow of “eyes on the street” become preferred spots for illegal dumping of waste. In Peckham town centre this impacts on the choices for the location of waste storage places and for the resistance to consider the option of using back streets as intermediary stages of waste management. It also implies the resistance to making waste containers available at high street level lest they attract free waste disposal for those who are obliged to pay for it. This has an ironic outcome: waste in Rye Lane has become so prevalent and transparent that it is now a permanent feature of the landscape, constantly threatening to cross the vital boundaries with the exchange of valuable goods. Waste needs to be contained and labelled, and permission of access to those containers needs to be communicated. Furthermore, if we move to a system where material separation is encouraged, containment of materials needs to become more important than containment of contractual permissions. In any case, good visual communication will always be a necessary enabler.

At the moment, the communicative landscape of waste management in the Peckham Town Centre is unintelligible and noisy. It is very difficult, even for those who make great efforts to “do the right thing” with regards to waste disposal, to find out how to do it, or even what that “right thing” is. This is particularly critical for visitors and for people who work in or commute through Peckham Town Centre, but it is still true for some of the newcomer businesses, as we found out in the course of our interviews.

In our first interviews, we came across an eco-conscientious owner of a new business who was complaining about the lack of facilities for waste disposal and recycling in the area; a local artist renting a studio in the Bussey Building who confessed to bring home all the recycling produced by her and the people who shared the space with her for lack of available facilities to recycle waste; and several residents and passers-by just dropping their waste bags next to the various piles of rubbish that accumulate in Rye Lane. At the time, the significance of this was not clear even to us.

Examples of visual signals contributing to the apparent incongruence of the system:

The **black litter bins** that punctuate the sidewalks of Southwark and in particular the area of PTC convey an image of dereliction, have no substantive information that can integrate them in a wider system and are often centres and attract fly-tipping and illegal dumping.

- **A better and more informative design of street bins could highly improve the situation.**

Unintentionally, litter pickers working for the council are often the first to signal and start the accumulation of illegal dumping of waste bags. By placing the bags that line the bins next to them, for collection by the dustcart, often hours before the next collection round, they in fact portray an image of fly-tipping to the population who is in most cases unaware of the origin of those bags. In some cases as at the beginning of Peckham Hill Street, many bags accumulate on the street for collection. According to reports from various council workers, the cuts to public funding taking place in the last 5 years have forced a reduction on the street cleaning team. This means that litter pickers are the first ones who are unable to comply with time banded systems of collection.



Figure 11. bin liner placed next to bin by council litter picker

Another aspect that creates difficulties for the people who use the streets of Peckham Town Centre is the lack of visible containers for recycling. If one's daily commute doesn't go through the back of Choumert Road Car Park or through Copeland Road, or through Peckham Rye, it is easy to be left with the sensation that there are no recycling facilities in the area.

- **Directions to the nearest local recycling centre, located, for example, on or near the black bins, could be a major contribution for adequate disposal and a general sense of an integrated system.**

Information in Southwark council website is also in deficit, starting with the location of those local recycling centres. In this case, there is a link to an interactive map, but the specific information about recycling is not amongst the following options. There is some information for commercial businesses, but it is outdated and

it is more a repository of information than an affirmative instrument of guidance and best practice.

- In both cases **the website could be an effective instrument to allow the council to assume a more powerful role in an integrated strategy for waste management in the local area.** This is especially true for local residents as who overwhelmingly search for information on waste disposal through the council’s website, but most of them find it hard to find, contradictory or inexistent (see charts below).

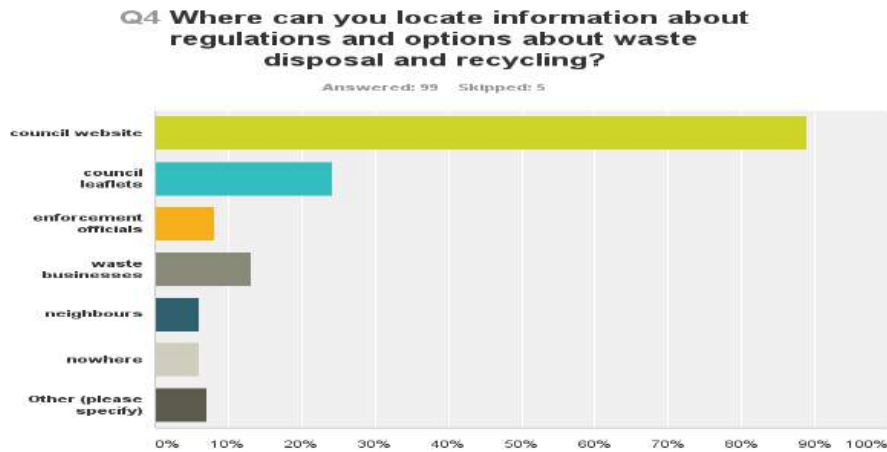


Chart 2 information about regulations and options about waste

Q3 How do you rate the access and quality of information provided to you about waste disposal?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 8

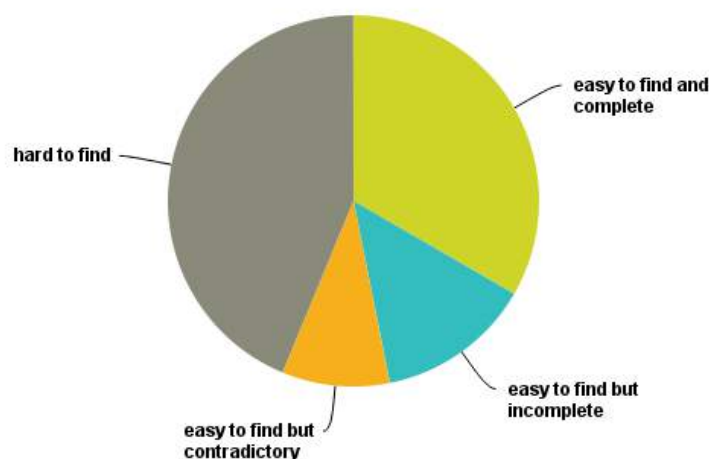


Chart 3. Quality of information

With respect to the creation of a collaborative and integrated social landscape that creates a wide notion of a rational system where everyone knows what the best practice is, the website is crucial but not sufficient. In an area where the footfall largely surpasses the local residents and local businesses, there is, at the level of the street, a lack of available information, awareness and access to knowledge about waste disposal and recycling practices. Interventions in the known hotspots for problematic dumping are usually restricted to threats of enforcement by fines and they never include information about local consequences and alternatives to these problematic practices.

- **All attempts to solve particular hotspots tend to be unsustainable as they are not accompanied by structured interventions in the public realm to declutter the public space of redundant signalling and urban furniture, and by a clear integration of the different elements of the local waste management.**

4) Futures and Options

Other Places

In order to outline suggestions and recommendations for the improving the situation with regards to waste management in Peckham Town Centre we looked into other diverse market centres in London to see what lessons could be learnt. These need to be considered whilst bearing in mind the unique character of PTC and especially Rye Lane, with its complex social mix and its hybrid configuration of market and closed shops with various shared and interchangeable situations.

a. Ridley road market

Ridley Road Market starts right in front of Dalston Kingsland Station. It has a typical market configuration with all stalls in one stretch of one street. The waste management arrangement is clear and very attractive although it clearly involves a large investment and we heard complaints from waste workers and from market traders.



Figure 12 – waste containers and electric carts in Ridley Road market

Four workers use electric carts to collect recyclables and general waste throughout the day feeding a compactor truck which is parked next to a fenced recycling centre with bins for other materials and a cardboard compactor. There are also compost bins which the market traders are meant to come and replace once theirs are full. Every market stall has compost bins and general waste bags and the electric carts pass by all the time.



Figure 13 the fenced recycling centre off Ridley Road Market with the stationary compactor vehicle waiting to be filled

Talking with the council workers and market traders in Ridley Road, it became clear that there will always be reason to complain. In this case the waste operators

complained about the amount of work involved in recycling, the lack of cooperation of market traders and the latter complained about the increase in fees. The operators of the electric carts also showed us some basic aspects that could be improved in the design of the cars. Both complaints show how important it is to involve those who work daily with waste in the period of consultation.

b. East Street Market

On East Street market, off Walworth Road; cleaning is operated by various metal carts which are used to feed the various compactors spread out on adjacent roads. The compactors exhale bad smells and are fed with contaminated recyclable materials.

c. Walworth Rd

Southwark Council is implemented a new time banded collection system which will force all contractors to collect within two time frames. The scheme is being piloted and enforced and the results will inform its transfer to Rye Lane. The new time banded system was preceded by a period of consultation.

Future opportunities

We know that the council will start providing commercial waste services in July 2016, and that the consultation for the new time banded collections may provide us with an opportunity to engage local businesses in ways that move away from the punitive approach. The new developments in PTC also represent an opportunity to plan for spaces where waste can be stored, segregated and streamed efficiently.

Potential Options

- Treating Rye Lane shops as a market, thus having shops pay for the council to deal with all waste in the high street in an integrated form.
- In order to overcome fragmentation, schemes of single provider or of clustering businesses around single providers by waste stream would both be a better option than the one we have at the present. More enforcement or other punitive measures would not solve the problem.
- The creation of a Business Improvement Districts is one means through which local businesses can come together to achieve collective negotiating power. It may be possible to learn from experiences of BIDs to develop a local version to achieve the same results.
- As clearly shown in this report, Rye Lane and the surrounding Peckham Town Centre are unique both in its difficulties and in the collective potential of its communities. Therefore, the development of integrated solutions formatted for other places may not be the best option. Instead, we advise learning from other examples and developing a unique plan specific to PTC.

Proposals

Taking advantage of the planned opening of a period of consultation for changes in the collection framework, we propose the following:

- The discussion of a plan for a new integrated system following from the recommendations expressed in this report about spaces, materials and movement.

- Creating communication between social groups, using the base of contacts generated by this research and the ideas about the social aspects of waste issues expressed in the sections about the Human Infrastructure. In a first stage create a small advisory group able to mediate with the wider community for effective processes of consultation and communication of changes.
- Finally, at a later stage, generate through creative processes, a new visibility for the vital importance of waste management, involving local artists, landscape architecture and urban design students in generating a more eloquent urban design.

Time frame

- We envisage a first period of 6 months for the process of preparation and consultation with a view of a dialogue for new options regarding waste and a further 6 months of implementation of a new system through the enlargement of the advisory group to more encompassing initiatives for the communication and improvement of a new system.
- At the first stage, decisions as to what kind of public investment and other findings and resources can be secured need to be made. At the end of this stage a clear system and plan of action involving all stakeholders will be devised.
- The second stage will start focusing on communication, mediation and on the involvement of visual and urban practitioners in order to improve the communicational aspect of the public realm.
- As long as there is sustained involvement from the beginning of key local figures that act as mediators and role models to other businesses and residents, from local activists to creative and successful entrepreneurs, we believe that in 12 months from now important and long lasting changes could be achieved.

CONCLUSION

People in Peckham are unhappy with waste. Waste is a problem in Peckham. These were our initial findings at the beginning of this journey. What we found on the way was an incredible amount of energy and potential to achieve change and improvement. The people of Peckham, in all its different communities, want and demand a better waste management service and, above that, they want a clean, safe and pleasant environment to live, work and play in.

In the course of our research we learned about the incredibly complex, multi-layered and contradictory systems currently in place to deal with waste in Peckham. The fact that it took two experienced researchers months to even find out what the arrangements were speaks volumes about the insurmountable difficulties of these systems. It is difficult for individuals who want to do the right thing. It is difficult for businesses who need to deploy ingenuity to grow and reduce their costs. It is difficult for political agents who need to deal with a very complex issue, hard demands and tight budgets. Yet the problem of waste management needs to be addressed by everyone of these peoples and most of the participants in this research are trying to address it to the best of their abilities. People's voices confirmed this, explaining and literally showing to us again and again that they wanted to help, but did not know how: the system is too complicated.

The way forward therefore has to be strategic, broad and overarching. A successful waste management strategy will need to bring all of the different actors highlighted in this report around a table. They would have to first of all listen to one another's stories and concerns, and then develop a way out together, collaboratively.

The council is uniquely placed to lead this process but can only do so if it is perceived as a force interested in broad, positive and strategic change rather than, as it is at the moment, being seen as pursuing narrow policies of fragmentation, privatization and punitive enforcement. There are also key actors in place in the form of local activists and associations engaged in processes of thinking the area as a whole, who can assume a leading role in this process.

People's creativity and sense of initiative must be channelled and placed at the heart of any future plans. Without getting all of the elements right – the mechanical, social and visual/design aspects of the waste problem – the kind of changes that Peckham wants and deserve cannot be achieved.

Harnessing the potential of the communities to bring about these changes is certainly possible, as we have sketched out in our vision for the future of Peckham. Ultimately this will rely on the ability of all actors to work together, to challenge the dominant, negative narratives around waste in Peckham and focus instead on thinking in new and different ways. This will lead everyone to act differently around waste and ultimately achieve positive and long-lasting improvement and change that Peckham deserves.

The Authors

Luna Glucksberg (LG) is an urban ethnographer working on inequality, class and space in contemporary British society. She has researched both ends of the social spectrum, and her field-sites range from London inner-city housing estates to elite areas in Chelsea and Mayfair, as well as housing estates of the Bogside (N.I) and suburban, disenfranchised areas of London. LG is interested in how inequality works from a structural perspective and in using ethnography to understand how this affects people's everyday lives. Her work spans anthropology, politics, geography and sociology. She is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR), Goldsmiths, University of London, and a Senior Associate at The Young Foundation.

In the past she has spent a total of seven years living in and conducting research on the estates of Peckham. During that time LG set up a TRA on her estate and served as secretary and eventually chair. She also sat on Area Forum representing her estate and attended Tenants Council. This level of activity allowed her an unparalleled level of understanding of how Southwark council worked and dealt with cleaning, waste and recycling issues. This involvement formed the basis of her PhD thesis "Wasting the Inner-city: Waste, Value and Anthropology on the Estates", funded by the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC).

Francisco Calafate-Faria (FCF) has been doing research on waste for 7 years. He has researched and written about community recycling, 'skipping', *freeganism*, recycling markets, and waste trade publications in London; municipal recycling at international level; and informal recycling in Brazil.

Since completing his doctoral thesis in 2014 on the informal waste economies of Curitiba, Brazil, FCF has taught at Goldsmiths, University of London and at Westminster University, and published both to academic and non-academic audiences.

FCF has previously completed contract research reports on student parents for the National Union of Students and on the night workers of the London Underground, for the LUL and Skills Lab