



Housing LIN

Connecting people, ideas and resources

A community led approach to supported housing – Haringey

Break Out Group Notes

19th September 2018

Background

The Housing LIN organised a half day event to help St Ann's Redevelopment Trust (StART) a group of Haringey residents and workers whose aim it to ensure that the parts of the St Ann's hospital site recently purchased by the GLA will be developed as a community asset. The StART vision is for new housing and community resources that integrate with existing hospital services and meet the needs of a broad range of people. Key aspirations are for:

- Housing that is genuinely affordable
- A community that enables good health and wellbeing and continues the legacy of health services on site
- The inclusion of supported living/Extra care housing for older people, people with a learning disability or mental health need.
- Includes and respects neighbours and the neighbourhood
- Sustainable development that has a positive impact on the environment

The event featured presentations from:

- David King (StART) – 'Ambitions for the site'
- Gill Taylor (London Borough of Haringey) – 'Evidence and Outcomes from the Supported Housing Review'
- Stephen Hill (UK co-Housing Network) – 'An inclusive community: Creating homes where people are not labelled by the type of accommodation'

All the presentations are available on the Housing LIN website:

<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Events/A-community-led-approach-to-supported-housing/>

Attendees broke into groups to share their experience and expertise about what has worked elsewhere and has potential to promote health and wellbeing and support vulnerable people in the new development.

1. Notes from 'Designing a healthy neighbourhood and integrating health services' Group

A healthy neighbourhood was one that is safe and environmentally healthy.

An example was given of Bourneville. Full of green space, wide pavements, quality housing, dual aspect, growing spaces and veg plots. Skilling up and training to be sustainable. Good social interaction and joint activities.

A couple of measuring tools related to physical activity were suggested, Examining Neighbourhood Activities in Built Living Environment in London (ENABLE) or Physical Activity Through Sustainable Transport Approaches (PASTA)

Other elements of a healthy neighbourhood were...

- Democratic involvement in the decisions made in the neighbourhood
- Good infrastructure
- Positive social and cultural environment
- Quality housing
- Access to good food
- Realising of skills
- Active community engagement
- Positive ownership and control by members of community
- Environmental sustainability

There was talk of GLA using a decentralised energy system.

Discussion then revolved around how the different visions for the site could be reconciled especially issues like affordable housing, the definition of affordable, and the concept of "in perpetuity".

There was discussion about who would live on the site and their health needs, would it young professionals on a London wide level or would services be about meeting the needs of the local community.

Key workers and vulnerable people were also considered. It was suggested that all these groups might benefit in a final package but that the local community must be seriously included in any devising of this package. The democratic inclusion and local control was also part of what made a neighbourhood healthy.

Examples of other schemes were discussed e.g. St Clement's Hospital site in Hackney with East London Community Land Trust (CLT) and Linden Homes + healthy neighbourhood energy scheme. Honor Oak Park.

St Ann's could be a showcase exemplar scheme for GLA and a huge catalyst for moving forwards. There was some discussion of how to convince sympathetic pension schemes to invest.

The potential value of allocating space for allotments was discussed.

The building developer saw their role as "build & go" so were interested in what might be in any future tender.

2. Notes from 'Creating a thriving intergenerational community' Group

What do we mean by intergeneration?

- All cultures, ages, abilities coming together
- A normal community something like a village
- Creating neighbourhoods
- People of all ages living together
- Enabling people of different ages to stay together
- A place where different generations can mix together but also have space for themselves

In the discussions "togetherness" came out a lot as a way to describe intergenerational living as did the idea that it should be seen as the norm not something different. Also the idea of flexibility – people coming together but also having space for the individual. But not everyone is the same so we shouldn't generalise.

How do we create "togetherness"?

- Need to look where different generations would spend their time together but also where this happens anyway/normally.
- Someone said "it takes a village to create a child"
- Society/we have to break down the intergenerational barriers wherever we see them or wherever they occur
- Adults have a role to play in educating children/young people about the benefits/solidarity of generations mixing more
- There was a question of "is more intergenerational activity actually better or not?" – generally felt it was but there needs to be choice as not everyone will feel comfortable doing it (from all generations).
- Need to look at how we get people talking to each other which isn't false
- We need to ask "what do you need?" but we also need to ask "what can you give?"
- Agreement that isolation and individualism were very prevalent in our society today and this needs breaking down
- It was felt that in the past in the UK and presently in some communities there was a lot more intergenerational coming together. One reason this may have broken down is many people no longer live where they grew up. We also have a much more transient way of living, especially in London, for a number of reasons which makes intergenerational relationships (and other community bonding relationships) harder.

Agreed the common view of intergenerational seems to be the young and old yet often the people in the middle (30's and 40's) often get let out of the discussion. We need to make sure when we talk of intergenerational we include all generations.

Has been shown that good quality intergenerational activity leads to people having better quality and longer lives.

How could better intergenerational living be achieved at a site like St Ann's?

- People need to have some shared values
- People moving in need to see that they are "getting more than a home"
- Things like Buy to Let can make community building across and within generations difficult as short lease tenants don't feel part of the area/community and causes transience. Buy to Leave means homes are empty which can also cause problems with community building across/within generations.
- It's not only what you build but how you build it: spaces where people can meet and people feeling part of the development.
- Need to think about visitors to homes as well as the home dwellers.
- Evolution of births and deaths and movements in family sizes needs to be thought about within a development, as family sizes change, so to stop people moving away they need to be able to move within a development and therefore stay, thus keeping/building on both community links and intergenerational relationships that have developed over years.
- Income diversity needs to be thought about as well for a mixed community but also as people's incomes change – especially as people get older and may need to downsize for financial or space or mobility reasons.

3. Notes from 'Integrating supported living/extra care housing into the community' Group

Start with what people want, involving them in design and production wherever possible. If an established community already exists, it may be easier to build on this rather than start from the beginning. Where possible consider extending the current community spaces by tying buildings together. Maintain flexibility within shared community spaces, i.e. the same building can be used by a variety of users. Create space that feels safe for all groups. Create lifetime homes for lifetime neighbourhoods so that people aren't expected to move when they require a certain level of support or care.

Support each person's independence so that they can participate in community activities, reducing social isolation. Encourage the wider local community into the facility and encourage resident use of local services:

- pre-school, school, student visits to facility;
- create an inviting environment e.g. fish pond on site that children enjoy visiting;
- think about places where people will mix e.g. health facilities on site; cafes; bars.
- nursery on site for employees;

- consider importance of common interests, e.g. linking in with local colleges/universities providing opportunities for learning and use of library facilities or linking in with local sports grounds allowing residents access to matches/games;
- use of local sports centres.

Shared café space could be used as follows:

- 1 daily meal in shared space as a condition of tenancy with aim of reducing social isolation and encouraging residents to eat well.
- Café open to public and used by wider community.
- Activities open to all within café space, e.g. book groups; lectures/talks; ideas to support healthy eating.
- Employment/skill sharing for residents.

Challenges

- Café/bar on site within extra care or supported facilities may be subsidised by residents. Sharing of these spaces can cause resentment if residents feel their space is being invaded. Requires skilled staff to manage expectations.
- Disparities in facilities between different users can cause tension, e.g. different access to facilities between those in shared ownership schemes and social housing tenants.

4. Notes from 'Building Effective Partnerships' Group

We started the discussion by having each participant share a positive partnership experience. Amongst the key aspects that were highlighted included: the involvement of different partners from the beginning and throughout the project, building trust, creating and implementing a just decision-making process, establishing good channels of communication, managing expectations, performing reciprocity and respecting different knowledges.

We then moved to talking about StART's case, looking at the question of involvement and membership. StART conducted a drive last year in order to increase its membership, and was successful at doing so. However, this did not translate in the involvement of these groups or members. There was a feeling that StART could support these communities and groups in achieving their own aims. Participants argue that StART's biggest strength is building alliances in Haringey in an effort to bring in people. This conversation also led to the question of representation.

With regards to public authorities or bodies, there are challenges including no shared language. The LDP2 track seems like business as usual, StART needs to think about what it means to be a partner. StART should look at other relationships it has that can influence the process and help it achieve its goals. One such way is getting more local people involved. Participants suggest that StART work on its website, making more material available including the brief given to architects. There was also a mention of a strategy adopted by an initiative in Liverpool, in which a local community group started organizing dinners open to local residents.

To move on from just being an advisory body StART should talk to politicians, and maybe should think about engaging at different levels of government.

Lastly, in addition to talking about partnerships, there was a brief mention of social movement as an effort to bridge different efforts across London and the UK, including around community-led housing and saving NHS land.

5. Notes from the 'Using technology' Group

As newer generations come through there will be more familiarity with digital technology, modes such as voice activated equipment and services. The 'hard wiring' such as fibre optic cabling to all homes and premises may enable new technologies to be used. This would mean that designers of space (homes, commercial and community space) need to have common specifications.

Where individuals have to purchase their own technology this can be expensive and may conflict with aspirations of 'affordable' homes. The potential for community wide systems such as Wi-Fi being installed as automatic at the outset and not at extra cost to residents can improve equality of access and range of communication channels.

Could this site be an exemplar of open source approaches to software systems, for example the housing and estate management systems used by housing providers. Currently each provider devises their own system and do not share with other providers.

Technology is not a replacement for human contact, technology that can assist with human contact is valuable, e.g. easy to use methods for having remote visual contact i.e. Skype type system but without the need for computer/table or smartphone. This is especially important for the cohort of people who will not have used computers at work, probably people currently 70+.

Technology that allows on- line circles of support for vulnerable individuals (with their consent) could enable more coordinated patterns of both formal and informal care. This could reduce the risk of social exclusion and isolation.

Forward planning to assist the development of sustainable transport could reduce reliance on motor vehicles on site. For example the use of drop off places for delivery vehicles on the edge of the site with transfer to robots might be viable and could be planned in. Alternative to car access on site for people who are frail could be helped by technology such as small driverless scooters.

Motion sensors and activation could be employed on the site both in and outside homes to do things such as provide audible wayfinding guidance for people with cognitive or visual impairment, to activate appropriate lighting levels to improve safety and mobility or to summon help.

Standardised digital systems for personal alarms across the site could bring benefits of familiarity and consistency.

Additional Comments made at end of discussion groups

The straitjacket within which public sector landowners have to operate is at risk of undermining aspirations for community led approaches.

Sometime community groups will be challenged by asking 'who do you represent'. The answer is that if you have a Community Land Trust then you have a clear purpose you are working to as a group of people. Politicians are the representatives of the people.

Selling off public land to a private developer can create problems in taking forward community led approaches.

Note

The views expressed in this paper have been anonymised and not necessarily those of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

About the Housing LIN

The Housing LIN is a sophisticated network bringing together over 40,000 housing, health and social care professionals in England and Wales to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population.

Recognised by government and industry as a leading 'knowledge hub' on specialist housing, our online and regional networked activities:

- connect people, ideas and resources to inform and improve the range of housing choices that enable older and disabled people to live independently
- provide intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and practice developments, and
- raise the profile of specialist housing with developers, commissioners and providers to plan, design and deliver aspirational housing for an ageing population.

For more about the Housing LN, visit: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/>

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Housing Learning and Improvement Network
c/o EAC, 3rd Floor,
89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TP

Tel: 020 7820 8077

Email: info@housinglin.org.uk

Web: www.housinglin.org.uk

Twitter: @HousingLIN & @HousingLINews