



**Community consultation on the
future of Somerleyton Road:
a report of Social Life's work in
Brixton in early 2013**

June 2013

Foreword from Stephen Jordan, Chair, Brixton Green

Brixton Green has evolved from the Brixton community, and at its heart is a community-led organisation. It has been shaped by a diverse cross-section of the community immediate to the Somerleyton site and across the five Brixton wards: making it a truly community-led and community-backed ambition. What makes Brixton Green different is that not only is it genuinely rooted in the local community, but it is constructed as a community shares project - maintaining ownership and stewardship within the five Brixton wards. Brixton Green has already demonstrated its relevance in the local area - with over 1,100 Brixton resident shareholders (as at 28th May 2013).

Since 2009, our initial engagement focused on the Moorlands Estate, as the immediate community, to help establish the grounding of the brief for the site. Contact was established through existing groups, we spoke to a wide range of residents from youth projects to groups for the elderly. In addition we contacted the wider community through well-known, accessible places like the Hill Mead Primary School, Moorlands Community Centre and the corner shop as well as door-knocking to maximise the opportunities for all residents to be aware of the project and to be involved. Building on trusted relationships was key to this, and a number of active, experienced and committed individuals have become important advisors and advocates for Brixton Green. People were asked for their ideas, comments and input, and from March 2011 given the opportunity to become shareholders.

Ongoing communication and opportunities for comment (online and in person) have been encouraged by continuous contact with community groups, wide distribution of flyers, prominence at events including the 'We Love Brixton' riot response event on Windrush Square, and events hosted by Loughborough Junction Action Group, Brixton Windmill and the Brixton Society. There have also been regular events at Brixton Village Unit 45. We have held discussions with public bodies and service providers, including health, police, housing associations and community and voluntary sector agencies.

Other community activity includes community workshops at the community centres on Moorlands and Angell Town Estates. A Family Fun Day at Dexter's Adventure Playground was a particular success bringing together over 850 people. We also organised workshops and discussions with local schools, churches and community organisations and doorstep and on-street discussions with residents of Moorlands and Guinness Trust estates. We worked with Hill Mead Primary School throughout 2012, and Hill Mead dedicated a day to the project culminating in an international food event which brought together parents to contribute to the plans. We have organised stalls at events including Lambeth Country Show, Brixton Windmill, Herne Hill and the Brixton Come Together event in the grounds of St Matthews Church. In 2011, 15,000 leaflets were delivered to homes and 3,500 sent home in school children's book bags. In 2012 10,000 leaflets were delivered to homes in the five Brixton wards and in 2013 an update of 23,000 leaflets were delivered.

We are excited about the opportunity to develop Somerleyton Road in partnership with the community, Lambeth council and Ovalhouse. We believe the community must have a real voice in what is built, how it is paid for and how it is managed and run in the future. We aim to build new homes, boost employment and empower the community to thrive.



Acknowledgements

This report was written by Nicola Bacon, Lucia Caistor-Arendar, Douglas Cochrane, So Jung Rim, Zoe Spiliopoulou and Saffron Woodcraft from Social Life.

It documents the work carried out by the team from January to March 2013.

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About Social Life

Social Life is a social enterprise set up by the Young Foundation in 2012 to take forward work on placemaking and innovation. We work in the UK and internationally. Go to www.social-life.co for more information.



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1 Summary

This report summarises the discussions and conclusions of Social Life’s community consultation work in late Winter and Spring of 2013, exploring different options for the future of Somerleyton Road, a poorly used site in Brixton.



Somerleyton Road is near the centre of Brixton, but separated geographically by the main overland railway that runs through the town. The Moorlands estate that borders the east side of Somerleyton Road is isolated further by a triangle of other railway lines. Historically, the east side of Brixton has been less prosperous than the rest of the town and deprivation levels remain high. Somerleyton Road was identified in the 2009 Brixton Masterplan as “a key regeneration opportunity”.

The west side of Somerleyton Road, a long narrow strip of land, is

around 15,000 square meters. The site is largely, but not wholly, owned by Lambeth council and is now largely used as depot space, with a temporary school building and refuse depot. The only residents on this land live in Carlton Mansions, a former block of railway workers housing, occupied by the Carlton Mansions Housing Coop.

Lambeth Council wants to redevelop the site, and to use this as a catalyst for economic activity in the neighbourhood. Ovalhouse theatre, currently located in Kennington, is planning to move all its activities to a new purpose built building at the north end of Somerleyton Road, on Coldharbour Lane. Brixton Green, set up in 2007 with a focus on developing the site as a base for community empowerment and enterprise, has been working with Lambeth and Ovalhouse to jointly develop proposals for the site. Lambeth’s formal intention to cooperate with Brixton Green and Ovalhouse was announced in January 2013.

Brixton Green commissioned Social Life in early 2013 to run a series of deliberative workshops. The aim was to enable people from Brixton’s many and diverse local communities, groups and businesses to come together to develop detailed and realistic plans for the site, and make recommendations to Lambeth Council, Brixton Green and Ovalhouse. These three organisations have been meeting as the “core group” for the Somerleyton Road project.

As a community engagement task alone, this was challenging, given the number of different communities, active groups and interests in Brixton, and the strength of local feeling about the impact of development and change in recent years. It was also complex in terms of the subject matter, scoping the different tasks involved in preparing a development brief for a substantial parcel of vacant land. It was important to take account of the many discussions about the site over recent

years. This includes discussions about the future of the Moorlands estate; the development of Brixton Green and Ovalhouse’s proposals for the site; and Lambeth’s consultations about its future plans for Brixton.

Brixton Green has carried out broad community engagement for the last five years, involving a wide cross section of the community. 1,100 local people have become Brixton Green shareholders. Social Life worked with Brixton Green to build on this work. In parallel to Social Life’s work, throughout March and April 2013, Brixton Green convened further engagement activities, including drop in workshops in Brixton Village and Herne Hill market and meetings with specific groups.

Social Life started in depth community consultation in January 2013, with the final events taking place at the end of April. Social Life carried out two community events, and other activities to recruit and involve local people in the work. The bulk of Social Life’s work focused on convening and facilitating 12 Action Planning Workshops. This report focuses on Social Life’s work.

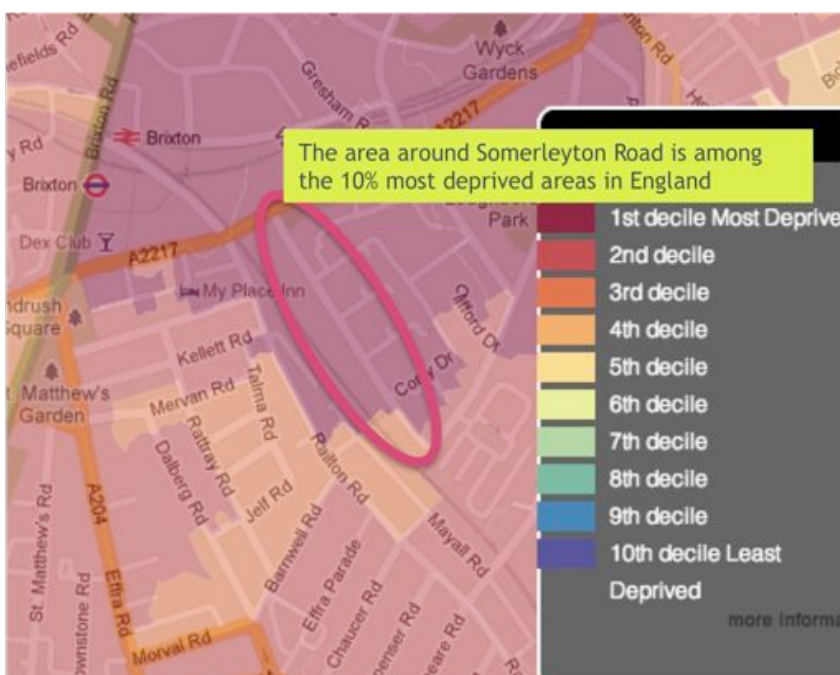
Action Planning Workshops

A series of 12 workshops were held between March and April in the Volunteer Centre Lambeth building on Brixton Station Road. In total, 79 people took part in the workshops.

The purpose of these was to involve local people in discussing and developing proposals for the redevelopment of Somerleyton Road. The aim was to develop clear propositions and ideas with a group of local people, focusing on what the site should look like, what provision and facilities should be created, and how these should be run and managed in the future.

Action Planning workshops were structured around four themes. Each theme met three times. The first two meetings lasted an hour and a half, the final meeting two hours. The themes were:

- Housing and communal spaces
- Health, education and culture
- Employment and training
- Long-term management.



Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2010, map from maptube.org

Principles

A set of eight principles that should guide the development emerged from the workshops.

1. Use the Somerleyton Road development as catalyst for a different approach to regenerating Brixton

...that works in the best interests of everyone living in the town, especially those living in close proximity to the site.

2. Maximize the number of new genuinely affordable homes

...including looking at options like self-build to bring down costs.

3. Create good quality, long-term jobs and training and support local businesses

...for Brixton people of all ages.

4. Ensure long-term resident control

...with on-going involvement in shaping the development from now on.

5. Make sure the new development is inclusive

... of its neighbouring communities, and brings people together across divides of age, social background, income, faith, and ethnicity.

6. Make Somerleyton Road green, safe and stress free

... so it can underpin the development of a resilient and sustainable community.

7. Make best use of what's already here

... building on existing strengths, assets, culture, heritage and character of the area.

8. Only work with commercial interests that complement the community's ambitions

... keeping the value and benefits of what flows from the site local.

Reaching consensus



In the third workshop, after discussing the proposals developed from the earlier workshops, people were asked to anonymously give an indication of their response to what they had seen. They were asked to indicate whether they agreed, and why; whether they agreed but had reservations; or whether they disagreed, and if so why.

52 people attended the final workshops and took part in this exercise.



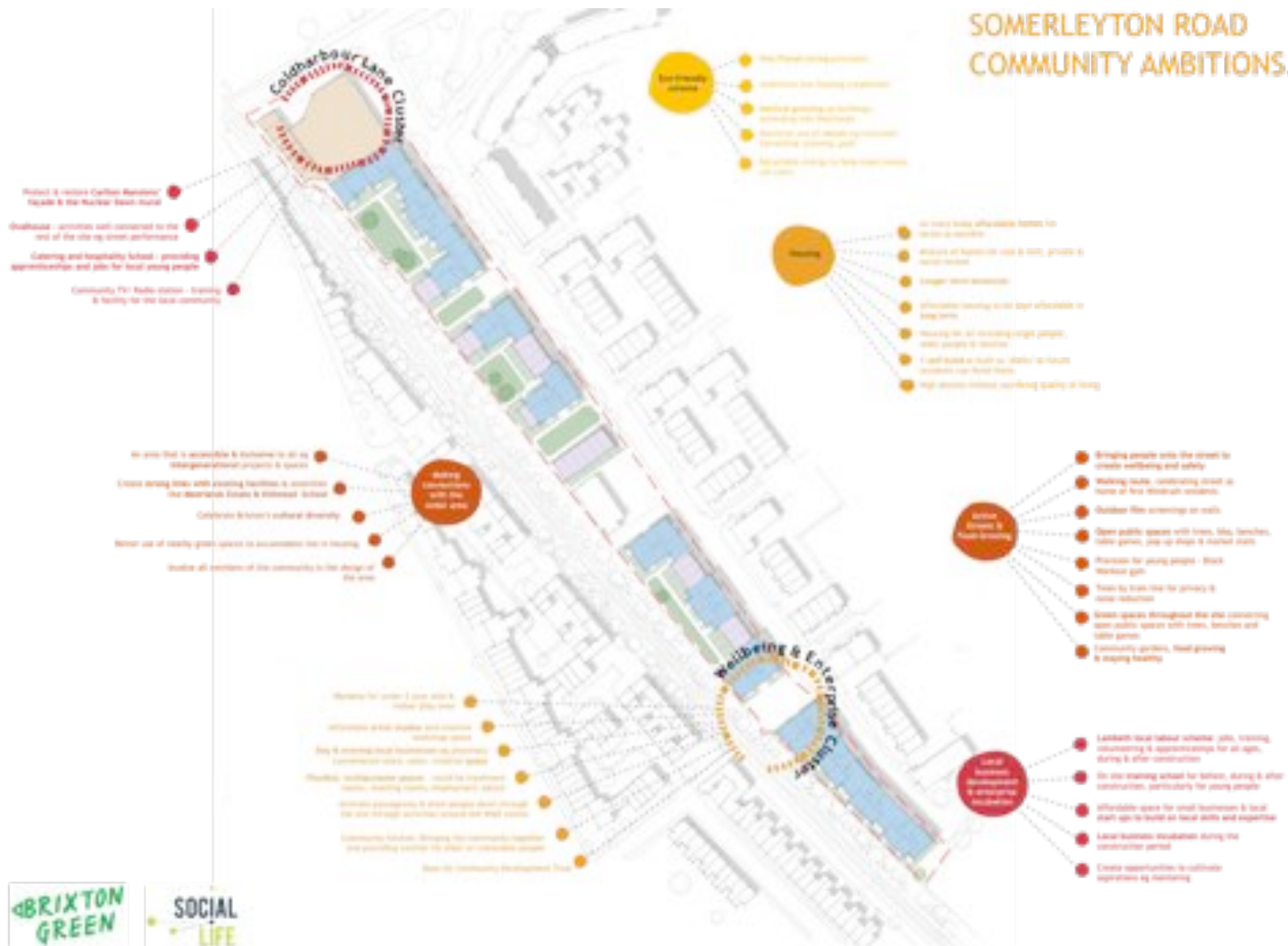
Of the 52 people who gave their views:

- 11 supported the proposals without any reservations.
- 35 supported the proposals subject to some queries and reservations, mostly to do with community control.
- 6 people did not support the proposals.

The proposals

The ideas that emerged from the Action Planning Workshops are summarised in two maps.

SOMERLEYTON ROAD COMMUNITY AMBITIONS...





ABOUT THESE IDEAS...



These ideas have been generated by a group of Brixton residents, community organisations and local businesses who took part in Action Planning Workshops about Somerleyton Road.

The Action Planning Workshops focused on four themes: housing and communal space, jobs, training and local businesses, health education and culture and long-term management. The Workshops were organised by Social Life, an independent social enterprise, and were held in March and April 2015.

These workshops build on other events and discussions with local people that have been organised by Brixton Green.

PROPOSAL FOR A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST...



Areas of contention and debate

The majority of this report discusses the areas where consensus was reached, however discussion in the workshops was intense and there were differences of opinion - some fundamental, some focusing more on detail - about the future of Somerleyton Road. The main areas where opinions diverged were around housing provision and community control.

In the housing discussions, a minority voiced a strong preference for the site to be developed by Lambeth as council housing. Although no one disagreed that a substantial proportion of new homes should be at rent levels affordable to local people already living in Brixton, there were some disagreements about the proportion of the site that should be social housing (ie housing let at “target” rents rather than “affordable” rents). Opinions also varied about the density of housing; and whether the height of the buildings discussed (mirroring Southwyck House) was appropriate for the area. Others argued that this was necessary to fund the number of affordable units.

There was a consensus in favour of community control, but opinions differed about the extent to which local people should be able to take ultimate control of any new provision and whether this opened up the risk that one section of the community could take over, and ignore, the wider interests of others living in Brixton. There were, similarly, competing views about the extent of long-term control the council should keep, and whether this could be a safeguard from capture by any one group. There were also debates about whether the representatives on any future Community Development Trust should be drawn from the wider Brixton area, or from the areas immediately surrounding Somerleyton Road.

Some people were concerned that any form of regeneration would cater to the needs of new incoming more affluent residents or visitors, at the expense of existing Brixton residents. People also worried about the impact of increasing land values on rent levels (for private and housing association tenancies). There were differing views about the extent to which the development should connect with, or model itself on, the regeneration of Brixton Village. Some people felt that the regeneration of the market had excluded local people, voicing some resentment that it was providing jobs for people outside of Brixton. However, others welcomed a new population and argued that the formerly under-used market has been given a new lease of life, which has benefited the area, enabling some residents to start up flourishing new businesses.

Similarly, there were some concerns about the impact of a “shiny” new development, with high design standards, on the adjacent areas that are more run down, and how this would make residents feel, in terms of their sense of belonging and self worth.

Questions were raised about whether the new services and facilities could duplicate and potentially replace existing services and facilities, such the Moorlands Community Centre.

There were also some disagreements about youth provision, and what would best appeal to the full diversity of Lambeth youth. It was agreed that young people should be heavily involved in designing the scheme in the next stages, and that this broad principal should apply to provision for all ages.



Limitations

Overall, a good cross section of people from Brixton's many communities came to the Action Planning workshops. Those who came were asked to attend all the workshops on a particular theme, and the majority did this.

The time available for this work however was limited, and the project timetable was very intensive. It was not possible to start organising the Action Planning Workshops until early March. The initial stages of work, including the Dexter's Playground Community Workshop, were supported by Social Life's pro bono contribution.

Some groups were less well represented at the workshop than others, and the Social Life team would have liked to have spent more time in discussions with Moorlands residents and with young people, although one event was held with children from Hill Mead school.

There was time to meet some local groups and tap into existing networks (on and off-line), but a longer timetable would have enabled more meetings and conversations to take place alongside the workshops.

The health, education and culture workshop covered a broad range of topics, which limited how much any one issue could be discussed. For example, there were some concerns that there was not enough time or space to properly discuss provision for young people, an issue that repeatedly arose in earlier conversations at the two Community Workshops.

Some residents also told the team that they were unwilling to come to yet another event about the future of their town, and there was a marked sense of consultation fatigue. Some people said they were unsure how the deliberative workshop process would influence decision-making by Lambeth Council and were concerned that Lambeth would not listen to the ideas that came out of the process.

Local disquiet over the low proportion of social housing on the nearby Brixton Square development, and the threatened eviction of the Carlton Mansions Housing Coop, also generated some unease and distrust in the process.

2 The proposals in detail

This section describes the priorities and ideas that were the subject of substantive discussions during the deliberative workshops. The aim of the workshop process was to put forward detailed recommendations that are both practical and realistic, therefore this report does not include every single suggestion that was made by individual workshop participants. The report reflects the issues that were discussed widely by the majority of participants.

Coldharbour Lane cluster

Ovalhouse - activities well connected to the rest of the site

The Ovalhouse theatre was identified as a significant asset for new residents of Somerleyton Road, the wider Brixton community, and visitors from further afield. Its programme of work should reflect this, making use of local resources, such as public squares and community facilities, bringing the work out of the building into the local area.

Protect and restore Carlton Mansions' façade and the Nuclear Dawn mural

Local heritage figured heavily in workshop discussions about Brixton's identity. The façade of Carlton Mansions and the Nuclear Dawn mural were both cited as integral to the character of Somerleyton Road. There was a wish from the majority of workshop participants that they be protected and restored to highlight some of the history of the site and surrounding area.

Catering and hospitality school - providing apprenticeships and jobs for local young people

The re-development of Somerleyton Road should create opportunities for young people to access work in the local area. A catering and hospitality school, or "chef's school" was suggested by Brixton Green representatives and was supported by participants. Linking to Brixton's thriving food scene, it could offer practical programmes leading to long-term employment, and support local businesses. There was some discussion about the possibility of opening a hotel on the site, possibly showcasing its high environmental standards and community-led ethos.

Community TV/ Radio station - training and facility for the local community

A community TV and radio station was one option discussed; it had been included in earlier Brixton Green plans and was supported by some participants. Another option for creating a new facility that could also train local people was to create a space for manufacturing sets for theatre, film and TV. Ovalhouse could be an early customer.

Wellbeing and Enterprise cluster

Nursery for under 2 year olds and indoor play area

The Somerleyton Road site should cater for people at a variety of life stages. This includes providing access to childcare. Existing providers report that they are stretched in meeting demand, especially for very young children. A nursery and indoor play area were proposed. Participants highlighted the vital role that these can play in connecting young families.

Affordable studios for artists and creative workshop space

Brixton has a rich tradition of supporting the creative trades. This is one of the reasons that the area has such a vibrant and engaged network of communities. It has become increasingly difficult to find low cost workshop spaces in the local area. The Somerleyton Road re-development should provide affordable studio spaces for artists and other creative people.

Day and evening local businesses

The south end of Somerleyton Road, especially the passage under the railway, can feel unsafe. If the new development includes commercial space that could be let to businesses which open at different times of the day and night, this would make the space better used and safer after dark. Examples could be a local convenience store or a hairdresser, both of which can provide a focus for people to come together and exchange information.

Flexible, multipurpose spaces

Successful places are inclusive and adaptable. The priorities of local people and organisations change over time and facilities need to respond to these. The Wellbeing and Enterprise cluster should include spaces that can support a range of uses and activities. Multi-purpose rooms could be set up and used as treatment rooms, meeting rooms or a drop-in for employment or other advice sessions, which could be provided on a outreach basis by local agencies.

Activate the passageway

Workshop participants emphasised the importance of making sure the east to west passageway under the railway at the bottom of the Somerleyton Road site, going through to Railton Road, is better used.

Currently the space around the existing passageway is associated with anti-social behaviour and gang activity. It passes under a railway line and is particularly unwelcoming after dark. The best way to increase safety is to make this area more attractive and better used. The Wellbeing and Enterprise cluster should aim to attract people to this end of the road by hosting projects, events and activities that are used by a wide range of people from across Brixton

Other suggestions focused on improving the appearance, for example, improving lighting, opening up the space (eg by chamfering the walls), creating better lines of sight, and making it look more visually appealing.

Community kitchen

Food was highlighted as an integral part of Brixton culture and a means through which local people can connect. A community kitchen could be used to provide meals for people who find it difficult to cook for themselves, such as older or more vulnerable residents. The kitchen could be hired by local residents for short periods, say an evening, to cook a meal that others would pay for. People on the Moorlands estate running small catering enterprises could use this to boost their incomes.

The kitchen could also connect with other activities on and near the site such as the chef's school, allotments, the early years nursery and Ovalhouse.



Base for Community Development Trust

The Community Development Trust needs an office from which to manage its operations. Putting this within the Wellbeing and Enterprise centre would encourage residents to feel more “ownership” over the Community Development Trust, increasing local input and improving transparency and accountability.

Creating an eco-friendly scheme

One Planet Living principles

Participants felt that the Somerleyton Road re-development should be guided by “One Planet Living”, a global initiative based on 10 principles of sustainability developed by BioRegional and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The principles are: zero carbon, zero waste, sustainable transport, local and sustainable materials, local and sustainable food, sustainable water, land use and wildlife, culture and community, equity and local economy, and health and happiness. A suggestion was made that an eco-hotel could showcase this exemplar work, attracting visitors interested in the model, as well as creating work opportunities.

Ambitious eco-housing credentials

Participants agreed that the site should be eco-friendly - making the most of resources and minimizing waste - alongside encouraging and incentivising people to reduce their energy use. Some argued that the housing should meet Code for Sustainable Homes level five or six, making it a showcase for environmental design.

Vertical growing up buildings, extending into Moorlands

Growing food vertically up the sides of buildings would take advantage of the scale of new buildings. This could extend to buildings on the Moorlands estate, including Southwyck House, connecting old and new.

Maximise use of roofs

Roofs were also identified as a potential resource for green infrastructure, including rainwater harvesting, community growing and shared communal spaces for local residents. These ideas were recognised as particularly important if the higher density housing goes ahead, giving residents much needed outside space.

Recyclable energy to help make money, cut costs

Energy efficiency helps with affordability of housing, avoiding fuel poverty, as well as reducing carbon emissions.

Housing

As many truly affordable homes for local people as possible

Affordable housing is a principal concern for local residents and the definition of affordability was discussed at length throughout the workshop series. Participants felt that the different definitions of affordability used by the council and developers - mirroring government housing policy - are confusing and can be misleading. For rents to be identified

as genuinely affordable, they should be benchmarked against the household income of residents rather than being set on the basis of tenure. A range of rents set at 40% of household income after tax and other deductions were discussed (see Appendix for affordability figures considered in the workshop).

Mixture of homes for sale and rent, private and social rented

A mixture of homes for sale and rent - mutual (encompassing all forms of collaborative or cooperative housing), private and social - should be included to attract residents from a variety of backgrounds (with as many as possible being let on lower rents - see point 1). The provision of privately owned units could help to raise capital to support larger allocations of genuinely affordable housing on the site. Some people wished to see the development providing rented housing only.

Housing for all, including single people, older people and families

People felt the development should provide homes for residents with a variety of housing priorities and needs. It should respond to people's wishes to stay in the area throughout their lives, and their changing needs for size and types of housing at different times in their lives. The development should include one bedroom units for single people, properties with high accessibility standards for less mobile occupants (eg older people), and larger homes for families.

Security for tenants

There was a strong feeling that all affordable rented housing should be offered to tenants on permanent tenancies.

Affordable housing to be kept affordable in long-term

There are strong concerns about the number of longstanding residents that have been priced out of Brixton's housing market, and the shortage of homes available at rents that can be afforded by local people. There was a wish that all the affordable homes on the Somerleyton Road site remain genuinely affordable in the long-term. Covenants and other measures that can ensure that housing remains affordable in perpetuity need to be investigated.

Percentage self-build or "built as shells" so future residents can finish them

Self-build was a particularly well-received idea. Participants were attracted to the notion of taking back some direct control over the development process, and enthusiastically discussed the potential of self-build to save money and improve local relationships. Some felt that an area for self-build units should be included in the Somerleyton Road proposals, others disputed whether this was practical. Alongside this, there was a wish that some homes should be "shell built" to bring down costs, allowing residents to finish off the property themselves, for example, putting in their own kitchen, flooring, and electrics. This can also provide people with construction training and skills, and could link to local employment opportunities as well as reducing cost.

High density without sacrificing quality of living

It was broadly agreed that higher density proposals could work, provided that the increased density leads to a larger proportion of genuinely affordable housing (by generating cross subsidy) and does not adversely affect residents' quality of life. New



homes should have good quality sound insulation, effective management of shared internal areas (eg stairwells), private balconies, and well-maintained public spaces, as well as access to roof space. Some workshop participants were resistant to the idea of higher density building.

Employment, local business development and enterprise

Lambeth local labour: jobs, training, volunteering and apprenticeships for all ages, during and after construction

The idea for Lambeth Local Labour came out of the second employment, training and local business workshop. This would be a local intermediary organisation, which would have two functions: creating opportunities for local people to gain skills (through entry level training, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training); and setting standards for construction contractors relating to local labour, for example targets for hiring local residents with low skills. If this were achieved on the Somerleyton Road project it would create a legacy for future projects in Brixton and across Lambeth.

It was suggested that Lambeth Local Labour could be run by Somerleyton Road's long-term management organisation (or Community Development Trust). It may be possible in the future to access funding for skills training and apprenticeships from Lambeth Council and the government, or possibly from Europe.

This organisation would need to work closely with Lambeth Council to design procurement policies and to make sure commitments (like paying the London Living Wage at minimum) are specified in all contractor tenders, and enforced. The scheme should make learn from existing models such as Westway, Shoreditch and Greenwich local labour schemes.

Thinking about how to create this organisation and how to start working with local people should start now, to make sure that local people and local businesses are ready to be part of the scheme when construction work starts.

On-site training school

Lambeth Local Labour will need a base on site to give local residents - especially young people - opportunities to train in construction related jobs before, during and after the completion of the Somerleyton Road development. This could use the National Skills Academy for Construction model, led by the Construction Industry Training Board.

Affordable space for small businesses and local start-ups to build on local skills and expertise

There was a strong feeling that Brixton residents (whether in paid employment or not) have considerable skills and expertise to offer. People seeking to set up their own social or commercial enterprises should be provided with opportunities to access business development advice and guidance, as well as low cost workspace.

Local business incubation during the construction period

The site will be in the construction phase for a number of years before it is finished. This interim period is an opportunity to use the space in different ways. Temporary low cost units could be offered to local start-ups to test and develop their ideas. The enterprises



that stand the test of time could then be embedded within the new development once it is complete.

Create opportunities to cultivate aspirations eg mentoring

Discussions focused on how to inspire people who had not enjoyed, or thrived, in formal education, and finding an “entry way activity” that could encourage people gradually to do things that they might initially find intimidating. Ovalhouse was seen as a potential way to develop this strand of thinking.

Making connections with the wider area

An area that is accessible and inclusive to all

The wish for this to be an inclusive project, involving people of all ages and backgrounds as well as local businesses, charities and community organisations, was voiced throughout the discussions. The development should be devised so that no particular groups feel excluded; public spaces, housing and amenities should be accessible to all members of the community. In particular it was felt to be important that existing residents have the opportunity to live, work in and use the site.

The development must be designed to meet the needs of both younger and older members of the community whilst cultivating relationships between them. New public spaces can provide an opportunity to nurture activities which bring together different generations around gardening, fitness, healthy eating and play.

Create strong links with existing facilities and amenities

To integrate and embed the development within the local area, strong connections (spatial, social and economic) will need to be created between the site and its neighbouring areas. The development cannot work in isolation, “it should fully engage with existing businesses, residents, services, rather than just build new and a new shiny environment”. The development should create strong links with existing facilities and amenities, including Brixton Recreational Centre and Evelyn Grace Academy.

Workshop participants stressed that the impact of this development will be felt most strongly by the residents living in and using the areas immediately adjacent to it. It will be important to make strong connections with the Moorlands estate and Hill Mead school - ensuring that they have a say in the development process to make sure that it meets their needs and aspirations.

Celebrate Brixton’s cultural diversity

Workshop participants felt that the cultural diversity of Brixton is a strong part of its identity, and that this wide mix of people should be maintained and celebrated. Somerleyton Road itself has an important historical legacy as the home of many of the first West Indian settlers from the Windrush generation. There is a clear role here for Ovalhouse.

Better use of nearby green spaces to accommodate the additional housing

High density housing will limit options to create new green areas on the site, but new residents, including families with children, will need green spaces for leisure and play.

Nearby green spaces, including Loughborough Park and the space in front of Southwyck House, will need to be improved.

Involve all members of the community in the design of the area

There were concerns about whether, and how, local residents could be involved in the next stages of development, and a particular wish that people living near to Somerleyton Road, especially on the Moorlands estate, should be fully involved in next steps.

Active streets and food growing

Bringing people onto the street to create wellbeing and safety

Streets feel safer when they are well used. Workshop participants came up with number of ways to bring people onto the street, ranging from guided walking tours and a Block Workout gym, to outdoor film screenings, community events and games, communal barbeques and food growing.

Many participants argued that Somerleyton Road could be made more welcoming by increasing the hours that the street is “open” to the public.

Walking route, celebrating street as home of first Windrush residents

Participants recognised the importance of celebrating the heritage and history of Somerleyton Road as home of first generation of people migrating from the Caribbean to London in the 1950s. This could be incorporated into the design of buildings. Walking tours were suggested to encourage people to learn about and appreciate hidden stories from Somerleyton Road’s past and present.

Outdoor film screenings on wall

The group discussed the idea of having an outdoor cinema - a space where films can be projected onto blank walls - that is publicly accessible and connected to Ovalhouse. This would also be an opportunity to show films made by local people, as well as screening notable local and national events, such as sports. It was felt important that what was shown had appeal across different sections of the local community.

Open public spaces

Creating open public spaces that can be shared by many different people came up frequently in the workshop discussions across the different themes. Windrush Square was often cited as a good example.

There should be slow spaces with trees, benches and table games, where people can sit and talk, and more active, “playful spaces” that encourage barbeques, market stalls and pop up shops. There could also be a long graffiti wall visible from the passing trains or a running track that runs down the central “walking route”, potentially connecting with the running track at Evelyn Grace school.

Provision for young people - Block Workout gym

Workshop participants voiced many concerns about prospects and opportunities for young people. There was a wish that the site should offer something positive for younger residents to build aspirations and make them feel a sense of ownership, and belonging, to



Somerleyton Road. Participants spoke of the need to consider young people involved in criminal gangs, who currently feel excluded from many mainstream activities in the area. Football was suggested as a good way to engage young people.

The Block Workout gym was discussed as a way of engaging young people in physical activity, getting people out on the street and occupying public spaces. Block Workout uses natural body movements, weight and exercises to promote physical fitness in London parks.

Trees by train line for privacy and noise reduction

Somerleyton Road is affected by high noise levels, as it is parallel to the train tracks. Trees should be used to protect the site from unwanted noise, absorbing sound and pollution and providing privacy for residents.

Community gardens, food growing and staying healthy

The idea of having a community garden, using rooftops, balconies, allotments and green spaces, was very popular. Food growing was seen as a way of staying active and healthy, and something that appeals to people from different backgrounds and ages.

Long-term stewardship

A community-led organisation with a clear social purpose

Participants wanted local residents to have influence and control over how the housing, public realm and community facilities on Somerleyton Road are managed in the long-term. After considering different options, support emerged for a Community Development Trust to be set up to fulfil this role, starting now.

There was agreement that a Community Development Trust should have a clear social purpose set out in a constitution or charitable articles: “to be a not-for-profit social business working to support the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the Somerleyton Road project; and involving residents, social enterprises, local businesses and the wider Brixton community.”

Financially independent and sustainable

The Community Development Trust should have an asset base so it can be financially independent and generate its own income. If Lambeth Council wish to retain the freehold of the Somerleyton Road site they could allow the Community Development Trust to hold the head-lease of the land. This would allow the Community Development Trust to generate rental income from community and commercial buildings and also from delivering contracts (eg housing management or upkeep of public spaces).

Activities and services

Workshop participants wanted to see the Community Development Trust fulfil several roles. First, to be a voice for the community throughout the development process and in the longer-term, ensuring the site and the Trust continue to respond to local needs and priorities; second, to preserve and enhance the social, environmental and economic value of the project for local communities; third, to manage buildings, housing and public



spaces; and fourth, to deliver social programmes, such as training, apprenticeships or young people's projects.

Governance

People felt very strongly that the Trust must be accountable and responsive to local residents and businesses, and it should not rely solely on volunteers. Workshop participants felt it was very important that the Trust have paid staff with responsibility for delivery, and a board of elected trustees or governors drawn from local residents, local enterprises, Lambeth ward councillors and possibly other public agencies.

3 Moving towards consensus

In the final workshop, the emerging ideas and a diagram of a possible Community Development Trust for Somerleyton Road were presented..

Workshop participants were asked to reflect on their personal responses to the ideas that were presented to them, both the specific proposals and initiatives, and the overarching Community Development Trust. They were asked to give feedback about what they liked and why, and what they were less comfortable with, and why.



Participants fed back their thoughts anonymously in two ways:

- by writing comments on the “community priorities” map
- by writing their overall comments on a tag, and placing this in one of three folders. If they agreed with the proposals they were asked to put the tag in the folder called “I agree, because..”, if they agreed but with

reservations they were asked to explain these and put their tag in the folder “I agree, but ...”); and if they disagreed, to put their tag in the folder called “I disagree, because...”).



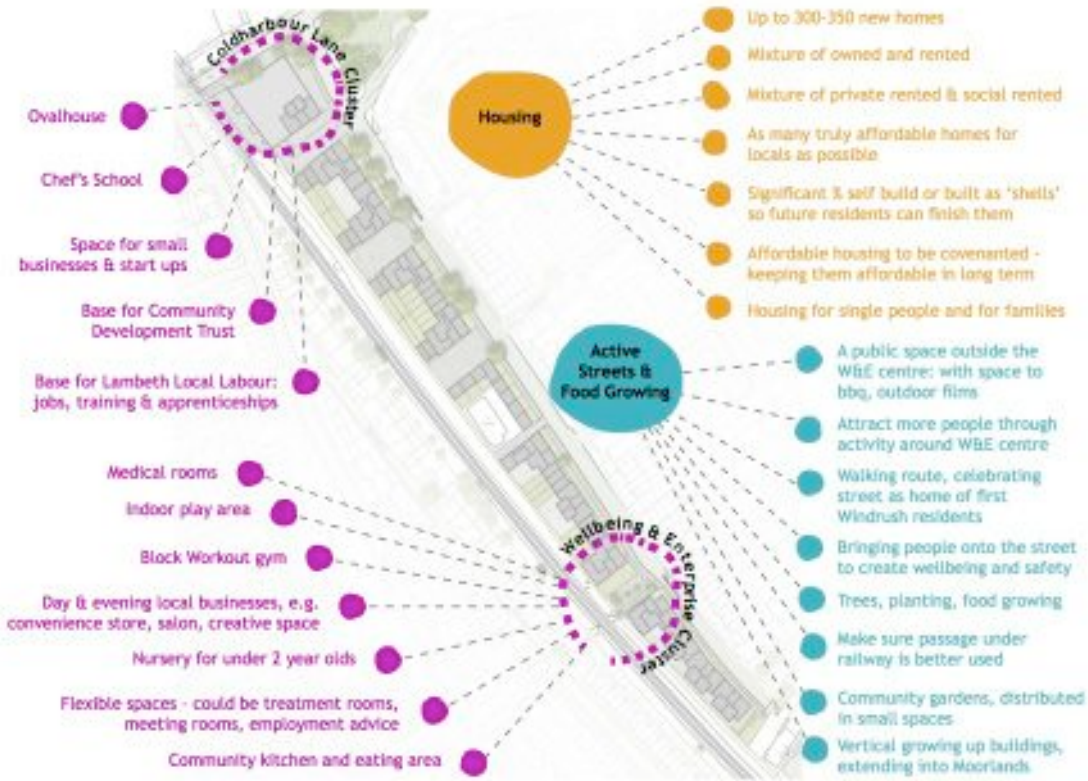
52 people gave their responses (this includes only those who came to the final workshops).

- 46 people supported the ideas presented
- 11 people supported these proposals without reservation; the rest voiced various caveats to their support
- six people disagreed with the ideas being taken forward.

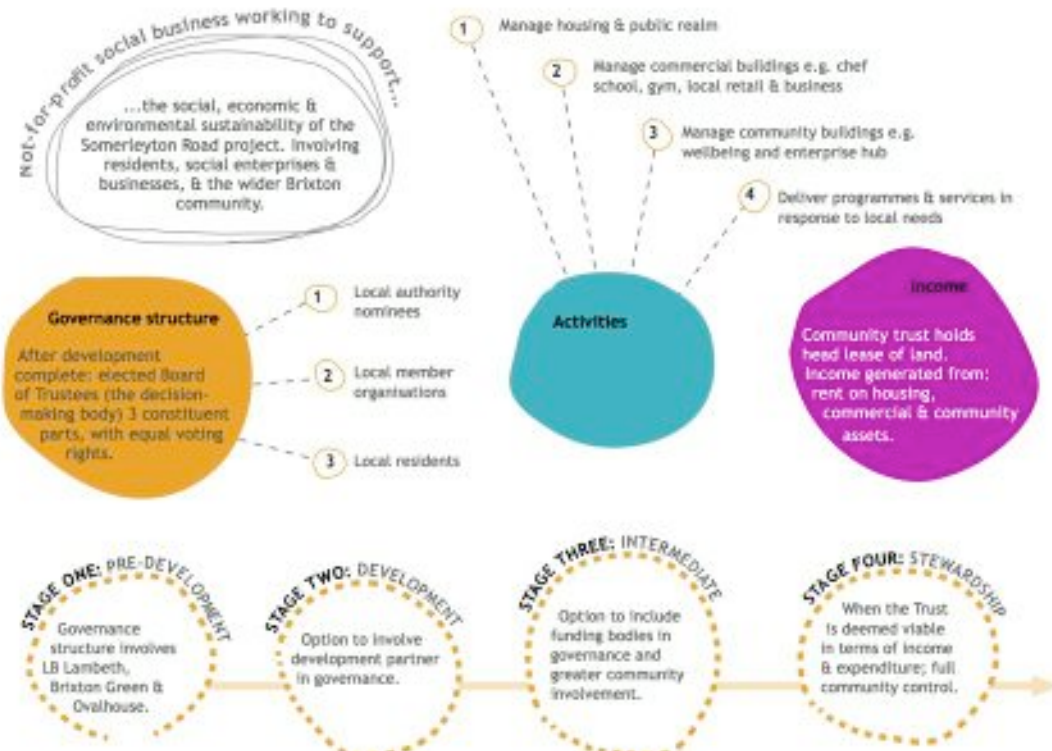
The maps that the final workshop participants were presented are below.

Maps discussed at the final Action Planning Workshops

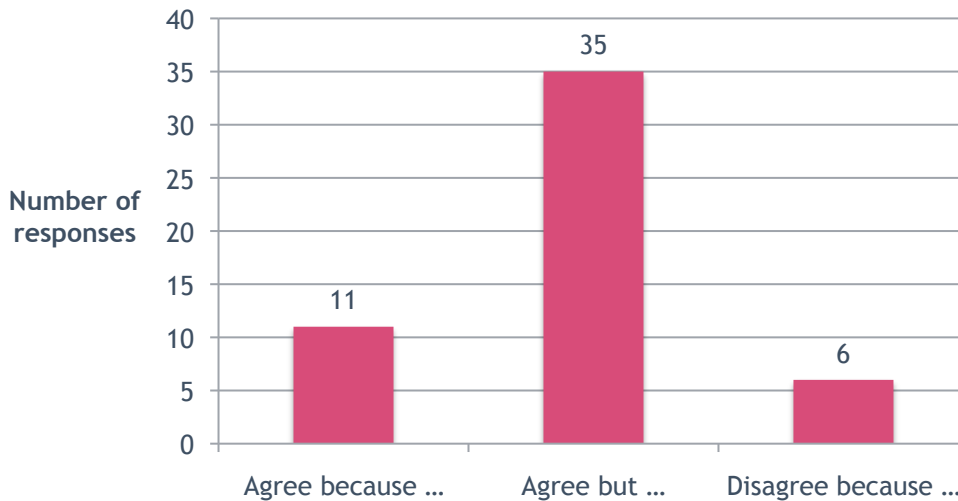
SOMERLEYTON ROAD COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



SOMERLEYTON ROAD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST



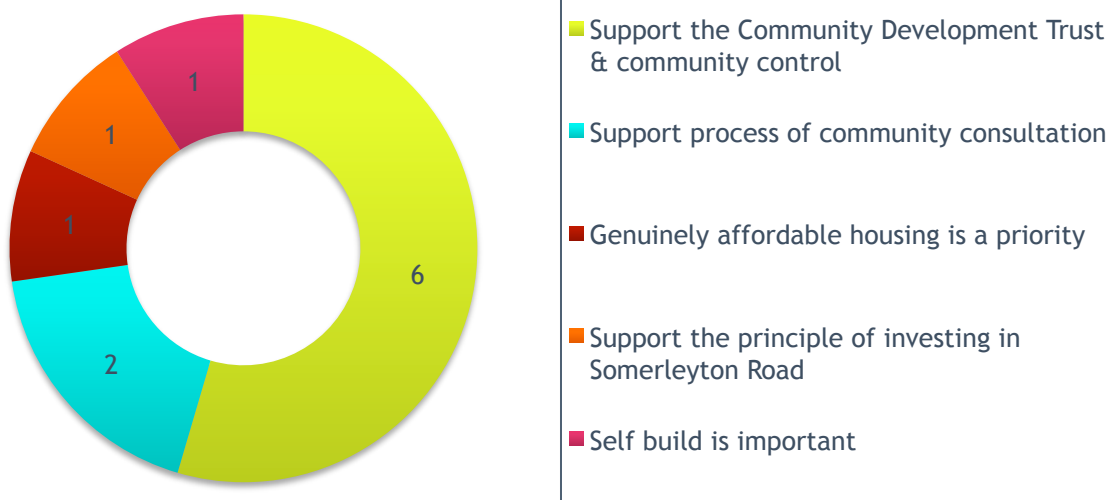
Final Action Planning Workshops: support for the proposals presented



Total number of responses = 52

Of those who agreed without reservation, the main reason given for their support was because of the proposals for community control. This accounted for more than half of the responses.

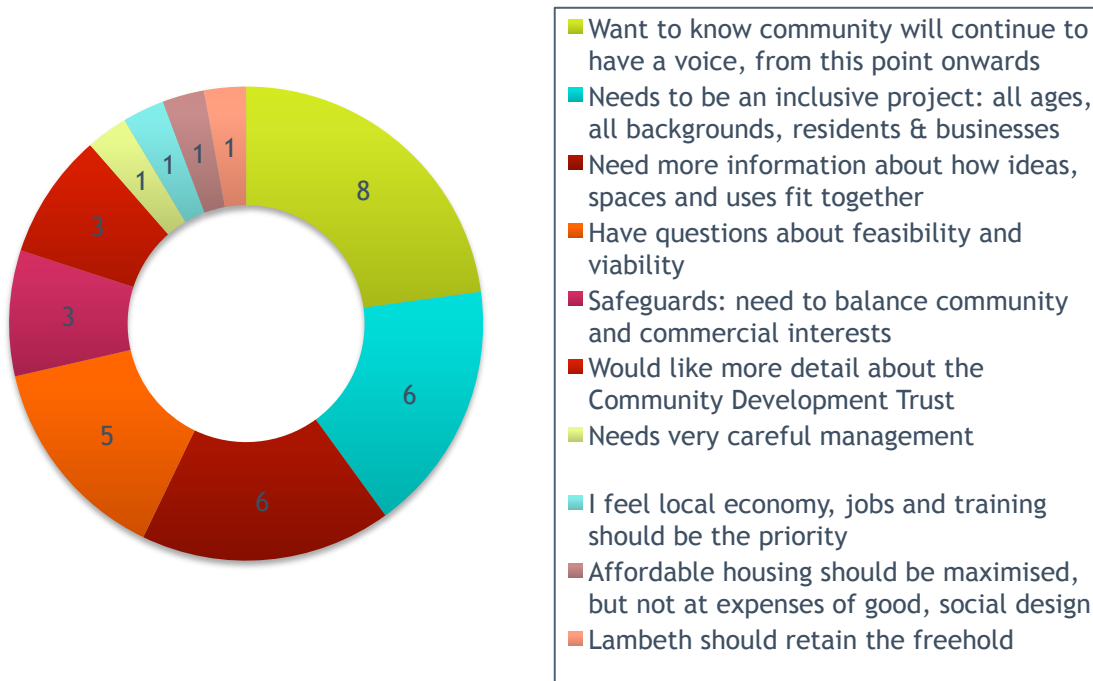
“I agree, because ...” number of responses per theme



Total number of responses = 11

Of those who agreed with reservations, the main concerns focused around on-going community voice, inclusiveness and their need for more information.

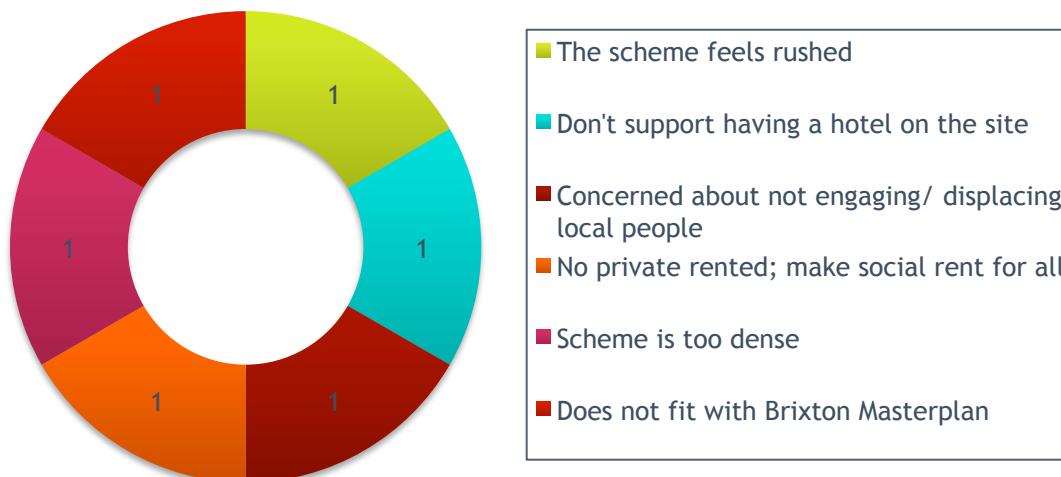
“I agree, but ...” number of responses per theme



Total number of responses = 35

The people who disagreed each gave different reasons, including that the scheme seemed rushed, overall density, a wish for the scheme to be entirely social rented housing, concern about displacement, the fit with the Brixton Masterplan and not liking the idea of a hotel on the site.

“I disagree, because” number of responses by theme



Total number of responses = 6

4 The four themes

Discussions in the workshops focusing on each of the four themes fed into the ideas that were consolidated and presented to the final workshops. The workshops focusing on each theme discussed particular issues and developed their own dynamic.

Housing and communal space



In many ways this was the most emotional, and technically complex of all the subjects.

Workshop participants were very aware of changes to government housing policy and the impact of these on rent levels, the effect of the government's welfare reform programme, as well as Lambeth's own proposals on security of tenure. The recent history of the reduction in the numbers of social rented homes in the new

Brixton Square development was also discussed.

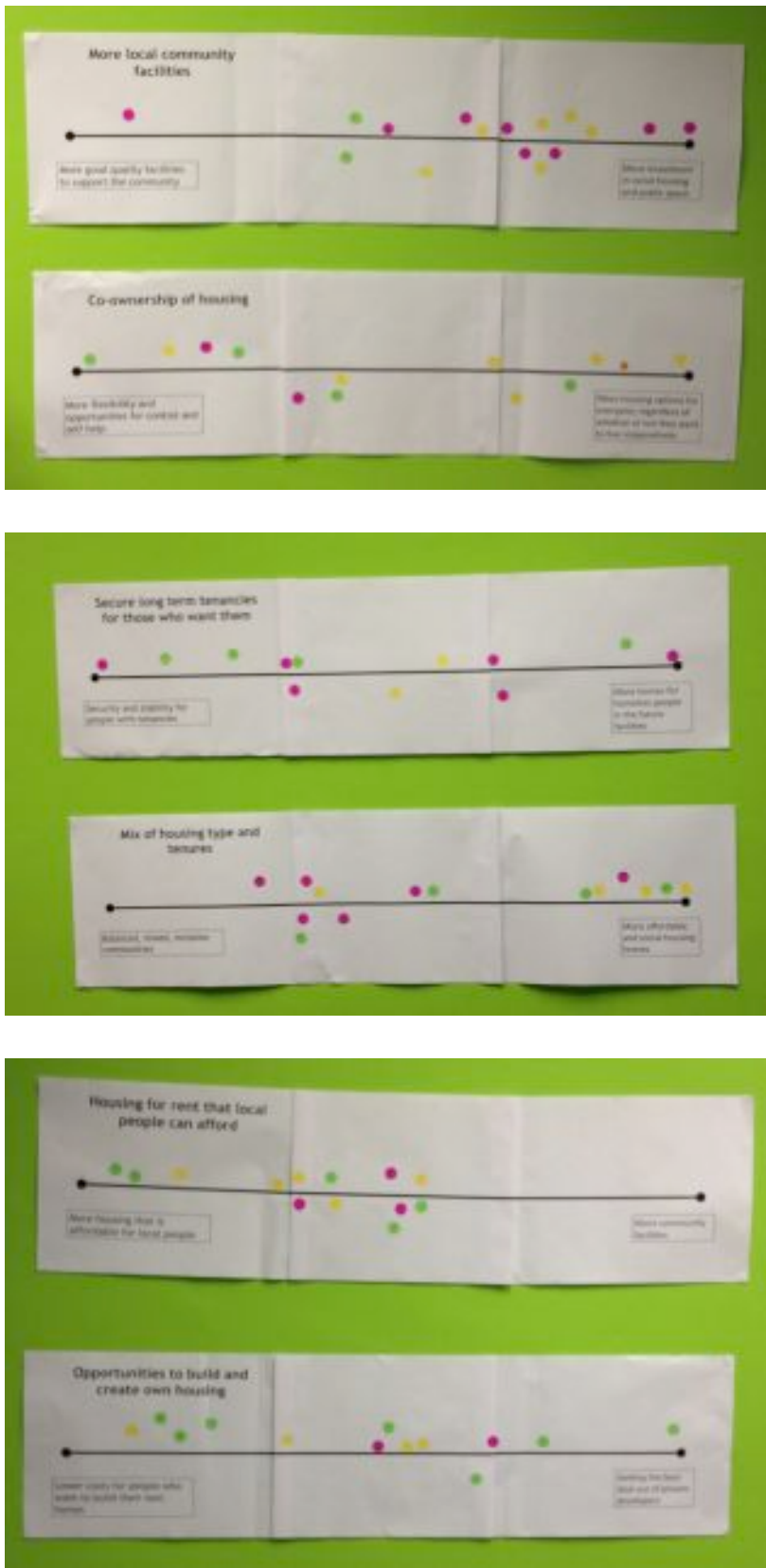
At the first workshop, there were discussions about self-build and self-procurement, about the role of housing coops, and about overall design, as well as an animated and intense discussion about affordability and security.

The format of the second housing and communal space workshop was changed to explore some of these bigger questions. After a discussion about terminology and definitions of tenure, affordability by income, and the costs of building new homes and income that could be generated (see Appendix), the workshop considered four development scenarios:

- Scenario 1: Private developer led
- Scenario 2: Community developer
- Scenario 3: Community Land Trust
- Scenario 4: Hybrid.

Workshop participants also suggested a fifth scenario, of Lambeth building new housing.

The group then looked the "trade offs" that would need to be made to make the scheme financially viable. Each participant was asked to place a sticker along the scale to indicate where they positioned themselves in relation to the six options, for example should there be more affordable housing or more public amenities. There was a clear view in favour of more affordable housing, and fewer community facilities.



Results of dot voting for six trade offs, second housing and communal space workshop



Long-term management

During the second Long-term Management workshop the group discussed the principles that should underpin the aims and function of a long-term management organisation:

- Maintaining Brixton’s diversity
- Inclusivity and the importance of being sensitive to what that means for local people: not everyone will want to be ‘visible’ or ‘formally included’ but their voices should count
- Supporting social capital (“bridging”, “bonding” and “linking”¹) and building trust
- Transparency
- Voice and control
- Community benefit: celebrating and supporting local creativity, co-operative principles, multi-generational needs.

The idea of the long-term management organisation as “glue” was discussed; an organisation that can bring people and organisations together, be the voice of local people, be accountable to local needs and to its founding principles, and deliver programmes and services. Questions were raised about who gets to decide on the final structure and purpose of this organisation; its constituency and boundaries; and governance structure.

The group identified three ultimate aims for the long-term management organisation: having sufficient control and sufficient income from assets to be financially independent and financially sustainable; being able to run local projects and services that meet the general principles identified above; and to be responsive to local needs.

The group discussed the need to “build now; start small; grow organically”; the importance of being pragmatic and realistic about how to make a long-term management organisation financially sustainable; and how a stepped approach could be used to achieve this.

Ideas from the jobs, training and local business workshop were introduced as examples of the kinds of services and functions a long-term management organisation could manage and support, if it had income streams from assets it owned.

¹ “Bridging” social capital refers broadly to relationships between different groups in a neighbourhood; “bonding” to relationships within any one group; and “linking” to relationships with local institutions and centres of power.

Health, education and culture

Discussions in this workshop ranged widely, covering the use of public space and food growing; music, arts and sports, education in the widest sense; collaboration and a health and wellbeing centre. Participants brought a high level of personal experience and skill, ranging from a therapist, through to community arts practitioners, youth workers, and people who worked for local health bodies.

The second workshop began with the principles and aspirations that came out of the first workshop:

- To think about the potential of the new development as the starting point for a range of new initiatives
- To make the road, and its immediate surroundings, feel welcoming, safe and empowering
- To make the most of the benefits of Ovalhouse's move to the top of Somerleyton Road
- To build on and celebrate what is already in Brixton
- To maximise use of the space, day and night.

Employment, training and local businesses



The discussions in this workshop were very cohesive. Participants felt strongly that the development of Somerleyton Road should be thought of holistically, taking account of the potential to create jobs and training and support local businesses from the very earliest stages. This includes thinking about how the site can create and support the local economy in the long-term.

Participants used the idea of a “bucket” to think about all the investment that will flow in and out of Somerleyton Road through the construction process and beyond, and how to stop any value leaking out of the bucket so that local people and businesses benefit from the redevelopment over time.



During the second workshop participants talked about the importance of a local organisation to co-ordinate jobs, training and business support, in particular:

- Planning for the construction phase: working with residents and businesses to get them ready to take up job opportunities and contracts
- Thinking about procurement and contracts for local businesses
- Providing affordable workspaces for start-up and established small businesses that reflect the needs of local enterprises, for example focusing on spaces for arts and creative industries as well as traditional trades.
- Making sure there is co-ordination with existing schemes that support jobs, training and apprenticeships, like the work carried out by Olmec and Metropolitan Housing
- Making connections with the long-term management organisation, and thinking about how local people and businesses can carry out management of the public realm and housing.

5 Approach

At the end of 2012, Social Life was asked by Brixton Green to prepare a detailed plan for a series of deliberative workshops to engage local residents in Brixton in the development of proposals for the future of Somerleyton Road.

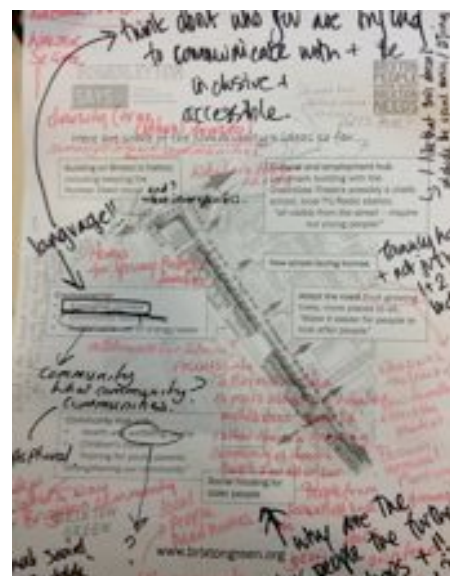
Deliberative workshops were chosen as an appropriate method of engagement for this. These enable a relatively small number of residents to explore critical issues. Deliberative workshops give an opportunity for participants to find out more about a topic, consider relevant evidence and discuss this with others before coming to a view. The method enables discussions to take place in great depth.

Other events to speak to wider groups of people, and to recruit for the deliberative workshops, also took place:

- Community workshop at Dexter’s Playground on February 9th
- Community workshop at Moorlands Community Centre on March 16th
- 12 Action Planning Workshops between 19th March and 25th April
- Site visit to Coin Street on 23rd April
- Workshop with year 4 children at Hill Mead School on 30th April.

Community workshops

Two public events were held at Dexter’s Playground in February and the Moorlands Community Centre in March. The events helped Social Life to understand what local people were concerned about, what they would like to see on the site, and to feed into the design of the Action Planning Workshops.





At the Dexter's playground workshop 100 people gave their contact details, asking for more information about future events. At the Moorlands workshop, over 30 residents were engaged in conversations, either on the street or on their doorsteps.

Action Planning Workshops

A series of 12 workshops were held between March and April in the Volunteer Centre Lambeth building on Brixton Station Road. The purpose of these was to involve local people in discussing and developing detailed and realistic ideas for the redevelopment of Somerleyton Road. The aim was to develop clear propositions and ideas with a group of local people for what the site could look like, what facilities could be included in the plans, and how these could be run and managed in the future.

Action Planning workshops were structured around four themes, with each thematic group meeting three times. The first two meetings lasted an hour and a half, the final meeting two hours.

The themes were:

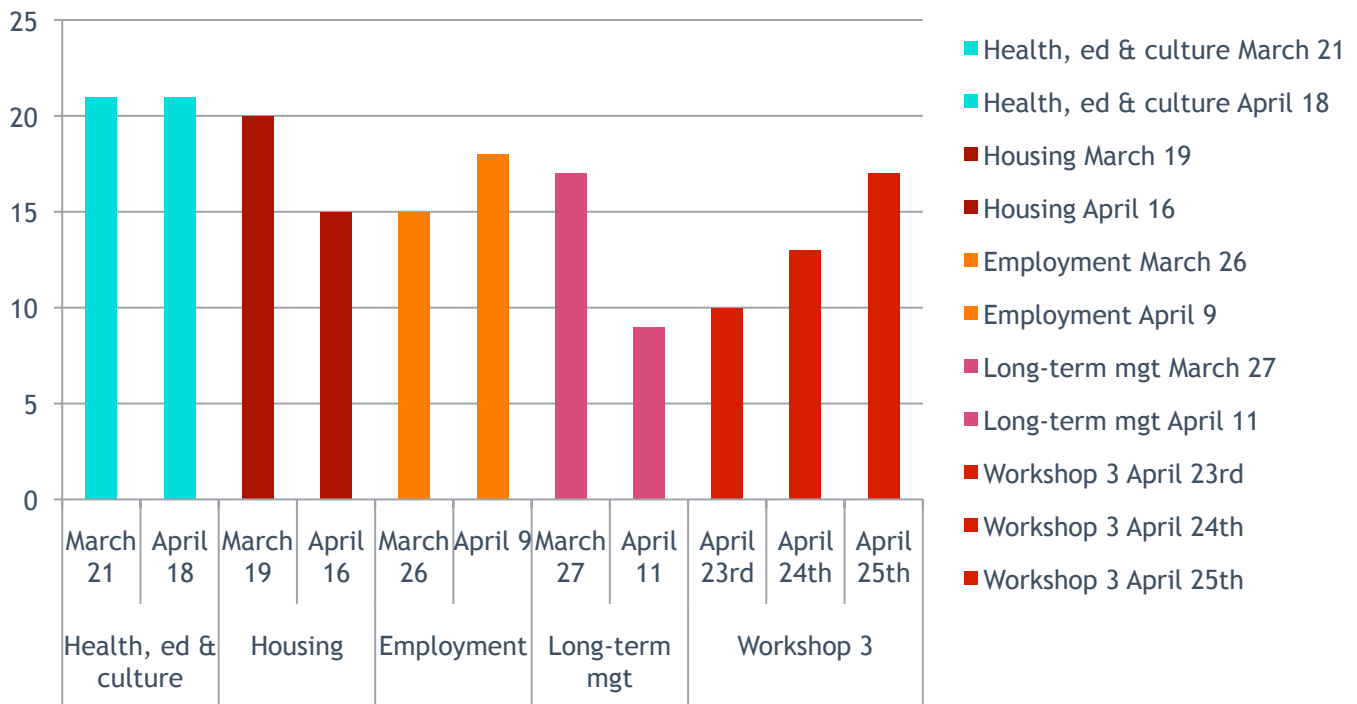
- Housing and communal space
- Health, education and culture
- Employment and training
- Long-term management.

Action Planning Workshops were based on the deliberative workshop process. Deliberative workshops include facilitated group discussions that provide participants with the opportunity to consider an issue in depth, challenge each other's opinions and develop their views to reach an informed position. Part of the process is providing relevant information over the course of the process. Participants were asked what information they wanted for the next session at the end of each workshop, and Social Life was tasked with finding out this information.

Participation was open to anyone who lived in or worked in Brixton. 79 people were involved in the Action Planning Workshops, mostly Brixton residents, with a small number attending who work in Brixton or are involved in local organisations. The numbers that took part in individual workshops are below.



Numbers of people taking part, by workshop



Total workshop participants = 79

The information below sets out what deliberative workshops are, and some of their pros and cons. The information is taken from a website called Participation Compass - <http://participationcompass.org> - which has been set up to help people and organisations trying to involve people in decisions making and planning. It was set up with funding from the UK Government, and Bertelsmann Stiftung, a German Foundation. The content was put together by public participation experts Involve. Go to <http://www.involve.org.uk> for more information about their work.

Deliberative workshops

Deliberative Workshops are a form of facilitated group discussions that provide participants with the opportunity to consider an issue in depth, challenge each other’s opinions and develop their views/arguments to reach an informed position. They allow the organisation conducting the event to have a greater understanding of what may lie behind an opinion or how people’s views change as they are given new information or deliberate on an issue. Deliberative Workshops are similar to focus groups, although there tends to be a greater emphasis on deliberation.

Participants

- Deliberative Workshops typically involve 8 to 16 participants.
- The choice of participants will depend on the issue at stake; participants could be selected on the basis of demographics, interest group or through a random selection.

Strengths

- Provides participants with the time and resources to consider an issue in-depth, including costs, benefits and long-term consequences.
- Discussing with others gives participants an insight into alternative perspectives, allowing their own views to be developed and challenged.
- It can build and improve relationships between participants.
- It can give participants new knowledge and skills.

Weaknesses

- Like all forms of qualitative research, Deliberative Workshops are open to manipulation: how the discussions/activities are framed, how the participants are introduced to the topic, and what questions are asked will all influence the results.
- Deliberative Workshops only involve small numbers of people and therefore can't be used to gather statistically significant data to accurately measure public opinion.
- The fact that participants' views are developed through deliberation may also mean that the final views are not representative of the views of the wider public, since they have not experienced the deliberative process.

Source: participationcompass.org

Recruitment

Recruitment for the Action Planning Workshops was from four sources:

- People who gave their contact details at the Moorlands and Dexter's Community Workshops (100 from Dexter's; 19 from Moorlands), and to Brixton Green at their stalls around Brixton in March (72 people)
- The Brixton Green membership, which is around 1,000 individuals
- By emailing every local group or community organisation that could be identified. Around 160 groups were contacted, as well as local councillors and agencies (32 contacts).

A leaflet publicising the workshops was also widely distributed.

Roles

At the start of the first workshops there was a discussion about Social Life's expectations of participants, and what they could expect of Social Life. These were also included in the briefing pack.

Social Life will:

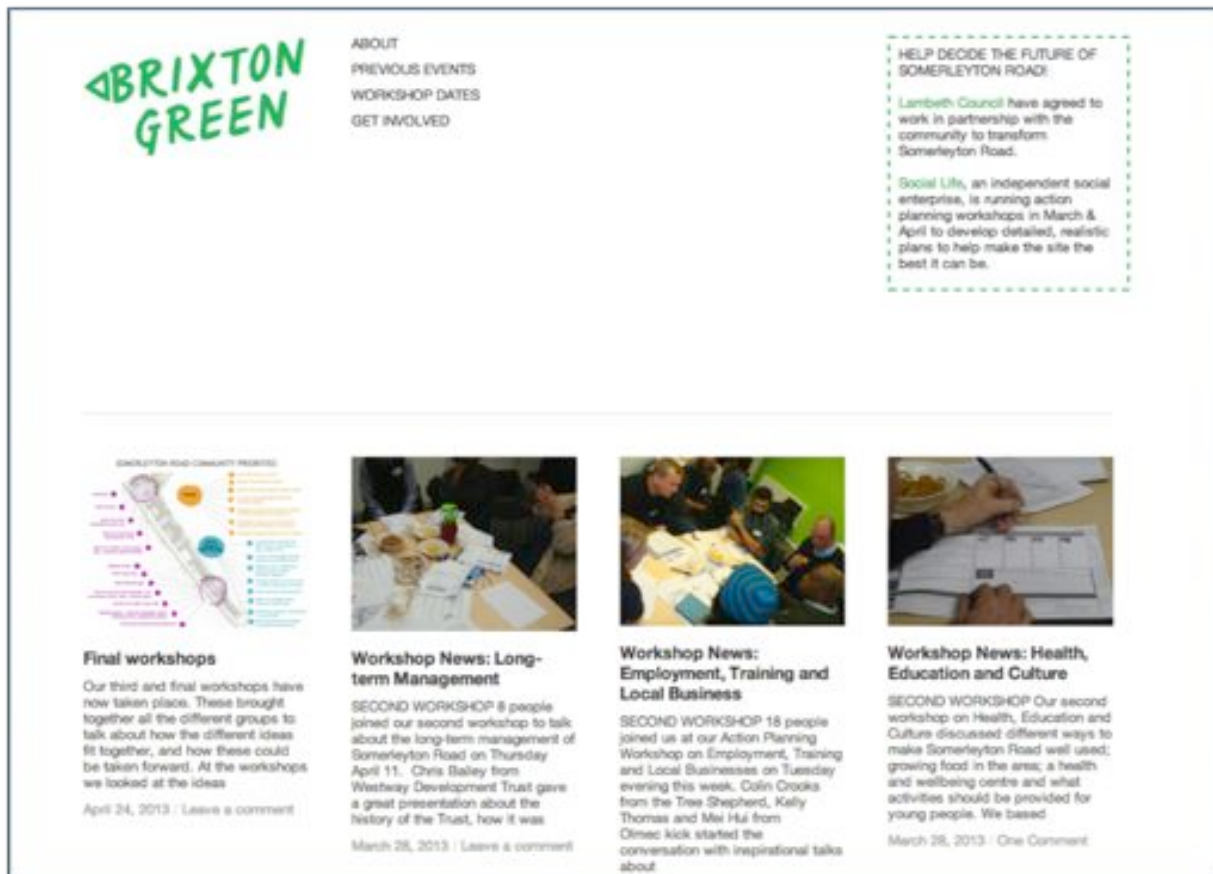
- Make sure everyone who takes part understands the purpose of the Action Planning Workshops and how they fit into the wider consultation process about Somerleyton Road
- Explain clearly the timetable for the Action Planning Workshops, what will happen to the ideas that are generated and how people can receive feedback about the process
- Explain clearly the starting point for the discussions and share information about the ideas that have been developed through other events and consultation exercises
- Explain clearly the constraints on the Somerleyton Road redevelopment plan
- Make sure everyone who takes part has the opportunity to present their views and ideas
- Acknowledge that differences of opinion exist and there will be a variety of views and opinions to be discussed
- Work hard to create an environment where everyone feels confident to share their ideas and concerns
- Make sure each workshop ends with a clear explanation about what will happen next
- Write up a summary of each workshop and publish it, plus any documents that went to the workshop on our blog <http://somerleytonsays.wordpress.com/>

We ask:

- That participants will work with us to help create an environment where everyone feels confident and supported in the workshops
- That people come to the workshops with open minds, prepared to share their views and learn
- That people attend the workshop primarily as individuals, on an equal footing with other participants
- That people focus on the task in hand - our time is limited - and accept that we will steer conversations away from subjects when they are less relevant to what we are trying to do
- That you work with us through this whole process, and come to all three Action Planning Workshops.

Making the process accessible

The ideas and proposals generated during each workshop were collated and published on the project blog <http://somerleytonsays.wordpress.com/>. This also gave information about the workshops. It provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the previous discussions and allowed people that could not attend the workshops to stay informed. All the materials provided in the workshops were also put on the blog.



Structuring the Action Planning Workshops

The workshops for the four themes followed broadly the same structure.

Workshop 1

The aim of the first Action Planning Workshops was to get the group to think creatively and realistically about different approaches to developing the site.

Workshops for all the four themes followed the same structure:

- The purpose, expectations of participants and of Social Life, and ground rules of the workshop were introduced
- Participants used visual prompt cards - photographs of Brixton and social needs statistics - and were asked to speak about their personal interest in the issues
- External experts were invited to talk about their experience of relevant initiatives
- Round table discussions identified ideas that participants wished to prioritise
- A second round table exercise focused on completing a template, designed to focus

thinking about the particular propositions

The image shows a workshop template titled "Ideas for Somerleyton Road". It is divided into two main sections: "The idea" and "Who uses it?".

The idea section includes:

- Description
- Assumptions
- Challenges
- Unknowns
- Who wins & who loses?

Who uses it? section includes:

- Person 1
- Person 2
- Person 3
- Person 4

Below these sections, there are two boxes for reflection:

- How does this make things better? What are the improved outcomes and benefits?
- Who do we need to speak to?
- What information do we need?

- From this, a list of priorities for the next workshop was created
- Notes from the workshop and the briefing materials for this session were posted on the project blog within two days of the workshop.

Workshop 2

The aim of the second Action Planning Workshops was to think more about priorities and what could be done, and to start to crystallise ideas into proposals that could be incorporated into recommendations for the site.

- The workshop started with a recap of the first session and the purpose of the workshops

The image shows a workshop template with six rows of questions:

- What is the idea?
- What is the outcome?
- What is needed to get it started? And to sustain it?
- Who needs to support it?
- What resources are needed to make this work?
- How does this fit with what is already in place?

- Written information - case studies and facts - and expert contributions helped inform the discussion
- The Social Life team suggested condensing some of the themes from the first group where there were synergies
- Participants worked in groups to fill out a template of the ideas they wished to see taken forwards
- Notes from the workshop and the

briefing materials for this session were posted on the project blog within two days of the workshop

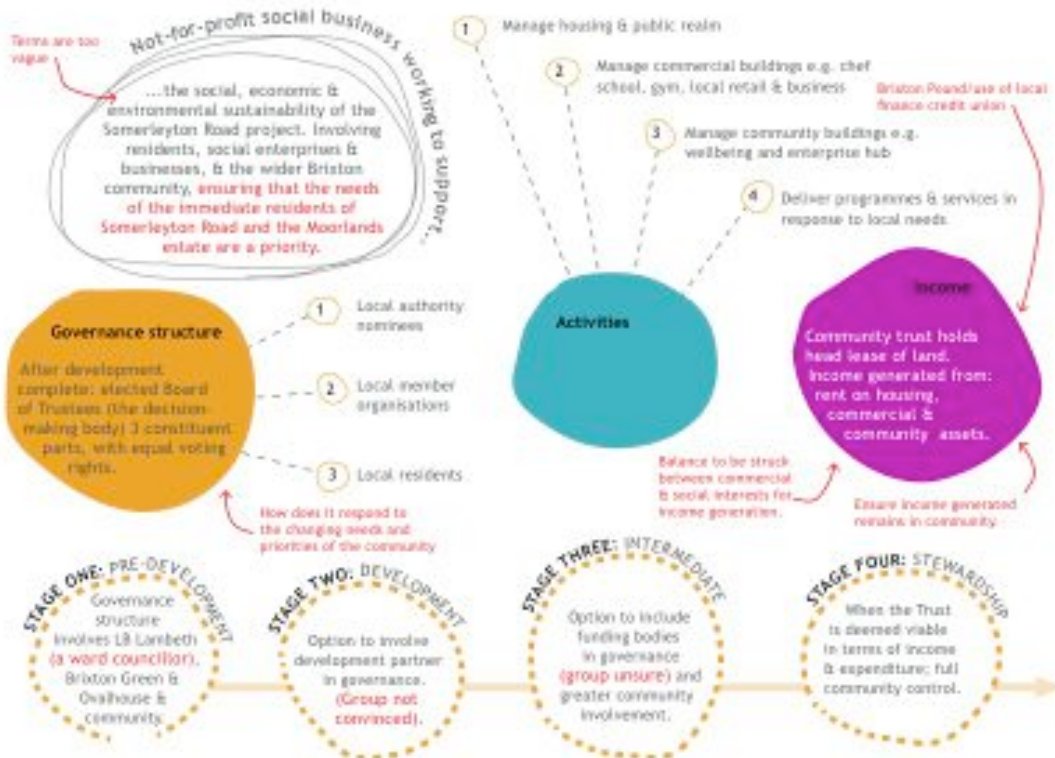
- The housing and communal space second workshop followed a different format (see above) because of the complexity of issues that needed to be discussed.

Workshop 3

The focus of the third Action Planning Workshops was to bring together all the ideas that had been generated through the process, so people could see the whole picture and how all the discussions and ideas from all the four themes fitted together.

- The workshops began by returning to the photos and needs prompt cards that had been used in the first meeting
- An ideas map, pulling together all the ideas from the first two workshops, was introduced
- There was discussion of this in groups, with feedback
- A diagram of a proposed Community Development Trust was introduced
- The groups discussed this and gave their feedback
- Participants were asked to give their individual feedback on the ideas that had been presented
- Participants were asked to indicate whether they support the proposals, and if so why; whether they supported the proposals but had some reservations; or whether they did not support the proposals, and if so why.

SOMERLEYTON ROAD CDT - Group 1 (23.04.13)



Feedback from one group at long-term management third workshop on the Community Development Trust proposals

Information presented to the workshops

	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3
Housing & communal space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert contributions from Iain Tuckett, Coin Street Community Builders • Lambeth data on housing and general social needs • Summary of the housing strategies that have been developed for the site so far in LB Lambeth’s Core Strategy (2011), the draft Brixton SPD: the Future Brixton masterplan; Lambeth’s 2013 Design Study for Somerleyton Road and Brixton Green’s draft masterplan • An outline of the key constraints • Briefing materials about workshop process • Ideas so far map - summary of Brixton Green’s work about options to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation recapping on the process and first workshop • Notes from the first workshop • Case studies and a variety of sources of information about self build, self procurement • Some definitions of key terms in housing policy • An illustration of the costs involved in building new homes and the income they can generate • Benefits and trade offs (see below) • Scenarios for development (see below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social need data for Brixton • Evidence about impact from existing Community Development Trusts • Draft proposals for a new Community Development Trust for Somerleyton Road from Brixton Green • Consolidated feedback from all four themes, first two workshops • Somerleyton Road community priorities visual • Somerleyton Road Community Development Trust visual
Employment, training and local business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert contribution from Elizabeth Cox from nef. • Lambeth data on the local economy and general social needs • Summary of the housing strategies that have been developed for the site so far in LB Lambeth’s Core Strategy (2011), the draft Brixton SPD: the Future Brixton masterplan; Lambeth’s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert contributions from Colin Crooks from the Tree Shepherd Kelly Thomas and Mei Hui from Olmec; Elizabeth Cox from nef and Emmanuel Coker from Metropolitan Housing • A presentation recapping on the process and first workshop • A briefing pack containing a wide range of good practice examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social need data for Brixton • Evidence about impact from existing Community Development Trusts • Draft proposals for a new Community Development Trust for Somerleyton Road from Brixton Green • Consolidated feedback from all four themes, first two workshops

	<p>2013 Design Study for Somerleyton Road and Brixton Green’s draft masterplan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline of the key constraints • Briefing materials about workshop process • Ideas so far map - summary of Brixton Green’s work about options to date 	<p>and an explanation of Lambeth’s procurement approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of notes from Workshop One • Outline of ‘Ideas so far’ from Workshop One 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerleyton Road community priorities visual
Long-term management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert contribution Ed Mayo, Cooperatives UK • Summary of the housing strategies that have been developed for the site so far in LB Lambeth’s Core Strategy (2011), the draft Brixton SPD: the Future Brixton masterplan; Lambeth’s 2013 Design Study for Somerleyton Road and Brixton Green’s draft masterplan • An outline of the key constraints • Briefing materials about workshop process • Ideas so far map - summary of Brixton Green’s work about options to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert contribution from Chris Bailey, Westway Development Trust • A presentation recapping on the process and first workshop • Summary of notes from Workshop 1 • Case studies about different options for long-term management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social need data for Brixton • Evidence about impact from existing Community Development Trust • Draft proposals for a new Community Development Trust for Somerleyton Road from Brixton Green • Consolidated feedback from all four themes, first two workshops • Somerleyton Road community priorities visual
Health, education and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lambeth data on health and education in Lambeth • Average levels of wellbeing and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation recapping on the process and first workshop • Summary of notes from Workshop 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social need data for Brixton • Evidence about impact from existing Community Development Trust

	<p>resilience on the Moorlands estate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An asset map for Loughborough Junction • Summary of the housing strategies that have been developed for the site so far in LB Lambeth’s Core Strategy (2011), the draft Brixton SPD: the Future Brixton masterplan; Lambeth’s 2013 Design Study for Somerleyton Road and Brixton Green’s draft masterplan • An outline of the key constraints • Briefing materials about workshop process • Ideas so far map - summary of Brixton Green’s work about options to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of ‘Ideas so far’ from workshop 1 • Definitions of ‘community resilience’ • Asset map of Loughborough Junction (2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft proposals for a new Community Development Trust for Somerleyton Road from Brixton Green • Consolidated feedback from all four themes, first two workshops • Somerleyton Road community priorities visual
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6 Wider consultation

As well as the Action Planning Workshops two community workshops were ran, at Dexter’s playground on February 9th, and on the Moorlands Community Centre on March 16th.

Community workshops

Workshop participants were asked:

Question 1: What do you think about the plans and the vision you’ve seen?

Question 2: What can the project do for the neighbourhood and communities around Somerleyton Road?

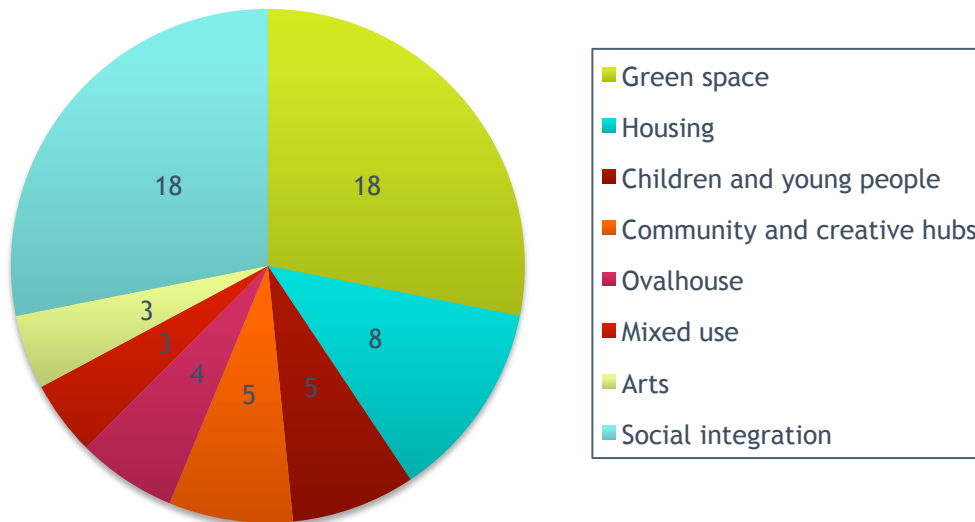
Question 3: What would you like to see in 10 years’ time?

At the Dexter’s workshop, people replied by filling in a form, by writing on maps, by hanging tags on the wall and by leaving other written comments. Conversations with Moorlands residents took place mainly on the street and on doorsteps and were less structured.

The results of the Dexter’s workshop consultation were:

Question 1: What do you think about the plans and the vision you’ve see?

- 64 people answered this question
- 25 supported the plan, characterising it as “great”, “fabulous”, impressive”
- 10 of them used the words “good”, “very good”, “interesting”, “positive”, no one was negative.

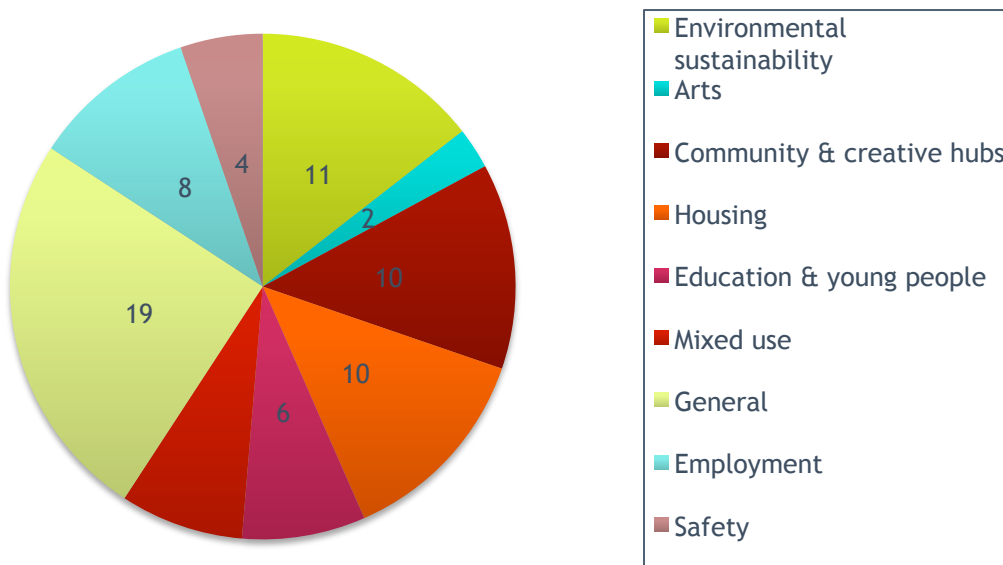


Total responses = 64

Question 2: What can the project do for the neighbourhood and communities around Somerleyton Road?

62 participants answered this question. The majority of were positive. Priorities that emerged were: the integration of the different cultures and communities, safety, employment opportunities, the future of local businesses. However, doubts were raised about the impact of, and fears of, gentrification.

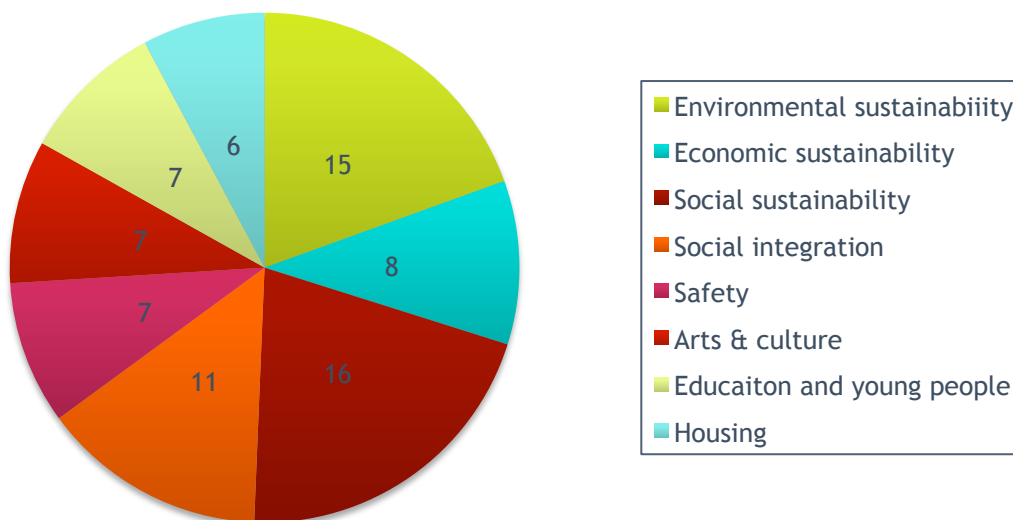
“It could be positive but I think that it’s important not to have any unintended consequences that push local people out of the area”



Total responses = 62

Question 3: What would you like to see in 10 years’ time?

57 people shared their opinion on how they would see their neighbourhood in 10 years time. The focus was on the environmental, economic and social sustainability of Somerleyton road. People want a safe environment and social integration. Educational and employment opportunities for young people are important, combined with appropriate housing for the elderly in a sustainable environment.



Total responses = 57

Hill Mead Primary School Workshop



Social Life ran a workshop with 20 children in Year 4 at Hill Mead school on 3rd April. Hill Mead school is on the Moorlands estate, behind Southwyck House. This workshop attempted to capture the opinions of children living in the area around Somerleyton Road. The aim was to uncover any local strengths, weaknesses or concerns overlooked by deliberative workshop participants but recognised as important by a much younger group.

The workshop lasted 90 minutes. Participants were first asked to map out their journey to school, starting from their home and highlighting any of the landmarks that they

notice along the way. This led into group discussions about what things local children like about the area, what things frustrate them, and what they might create if they were Prime Minister for the day. Children were then asked to draw some of the key ideas that came out of discussions.

Things they like

- **Familiar faces:** participants all said that they feel safe and secure when they are with people from the local area that they recognise and trust. These people include their immediate friends and families, the owners of local shops and food stalls, and the Moorlands Community Centre workers.
- **Shops, restaurants and cinemas:** it was agreed that living in Brixton was nice because of all the places to visit close to home. Participants were very happy to talk in detail about their favourite Chinese takeaway or sweet shop, and a number are regular visitors to Kids Club at the Ritzy Cinema on Saturdays.
- **Local activities for children:** almost all of the participants were involved in at least one weekly activity outside of school. Some are members of a dance club, others attend judo or art classes, are learning to play a musical instrument, or play for local football teams.

Things that frustrate them

- **Homeless people:** children were sad about the number of men and women in the street without anywhere to live. They agreed that they saw too many people getting drunk during the day and thought that this might be because they had no family or job.
- **Older kids “causing trouble”:** it was suggested that playing in and around the Moorlands estate feels unsafe because “teenagers are always hanging around, smoking and shouting”.

Some of the participants talked about having their property damaged or stolen and were upset that they could not have fun without worrying that older children might interrupt their games.

- **Unwelcoming local environment:** there was some concern about the condition of local streets. Children consistently complained about rubbish left on the side of the road, noisy cars and lorries, smashed windows and damaged properties, and half-finished new-build developments.

Things they would add into the plans

- **More facilities for children and young people:** participants want theme parks, museums, water parks, ice rinks and swimming pools. Although these examples are beyond the scope of this development, the message is clear: local children want more places where they feel welcome and can have fun.
- **Bigger green spaces:** it was agreed that there are not enough parks where children can play safely without having to worry about being interrupted by people older than them. Some children also expressed a desire to use existing green spaces to grow flowers, fruit and vegetables.
- **Places to help vulnerable people:** participants thought that the new development should include places where people who are having difficulties in their personal lives can go to relax and meet new people who might be able to help. They suggested that new facilities should provide food, shelter and education services to local residents in need.

Site visit to Coin Street

During our Action Planning Workshops on Housing and Communal Space, Iain Tuckett from Coin Street Community Builders contributed as an expert. He shared his experiences of supporting housing co-operatives over the last 30 years and converting a community campaign into a development project. On the back of his presentation, a number of participants expressed an interest in visiting Coin Street to see how this model can work in practice.

Coin Street Community Builders invited workshop participants to visit the Coin Street site on 25th April. Iain Tuckett took seven Brixton residents around the Neighbourhood Centre, including the family and children's centre, three of the associated housing co-operatives and Bernie Spain gardens, a public space on the Southbank which is owned by Coin Street Community Builders. Some of the participants that visited Coin Street said it was inspiring and that seeing this example made their visions for Somerleyton Road feel more feasible.

Online discussions

Information about the Community Workshops and Action Planning Workshops was posted on different online forums and websites, including the Brixton Blog, Urban75, the Herne Hill forum and very local websites like Effrabblog.

On Urban75, different threads discussed the future of Somerleyton Road. Several themes emerged.

Homes that are genuinely affordable

“What I took from the first meeting was the strength of feeling on the need for the site to have really affordable housing with secure tenancies. I cannot emphasise this more. The strength of feeling

surprised me. People expressed concerns about the long-term effects of this governments "reforms" of housing and benefits."

"Bottom line is that... people want affordable housing ie rent that is affordable without recourse to benefits"

"We need new homes but not ones that the local community can't afford."

Keep and improve Somerleyton Passage

"There was talk that it might go, which would be a real inconvenience."

Keeping the Nuclear Dawn mural

"The mural is very important to lot of local people and is part of Brixton's cultural history."

"I am concerned that the mural is not going to get much light and I am not clear about how well it will be seen from ground level."

The relationship with the wider neighbourhood

"Better, more welcoming access points from Railton Road will help immeasurably - as would a way of getting to and from the Evelyn Grace and Hill Mead from Milkwood Rd. Ovalhouse could be brilliant if it functions as a gateway into the area."

"The railway embankment provides a border from central Brixton that is increasingly becoming entertainment zone and less retail area."

"Both Hill Mead and Evelyn Grace are hard to get to from the south, west and east. .. opening up communities so people can walk easily from one area to the next is generally a good thing."

"Any opening up of access in the estate should only be done if the people on the estate wanted this. It should not be imposed on them from outside."

"Despite its reputation, Moorlands is really quiet and peaceful and that's nice too. The area suffers more from perception than reality"

"I like the fact that the Moorlands Estate feels entirely separate and more residential than Village/central Brixton. One of the suggestions at the meeting was to get rid of some of the cul-de-sacs on the estate so people could walk through/across it easier. There may be some merit to that."

"The job to be done is to remove that unwelcoming perception - lessening the sense of borders round the edge and giving more people a reason to wander through it."

"Remove that hideous car washing business and all its ugly steel fencing and replace it with a community garden. At a stroke the neighbourhood would be improved and local families - as well as the many new residents set top move in across the road - will have a welcome green space."

Support for Ovalhouse

"I'd be thrilled to see them on that corner. Any ethical organisation working with locals and local young people needs all the support we can muster these days."

"If Ovalhouse does come to that corner then it has to be done properly. A well designed landmark building that has a presence. Not a compromise due to economic constraints."

"The Brixton Masterplan acknowledges that this part of Brixton has a historical heritage of arts. There is less and less affordable space for artists and creative people in Brixton."

Comments on the process



“The discussions are being rushed. The structure of consultation is being made as the discussions are taking place. Not very satisfactory. The community is being given short time span to look at these plans.”

“It’s important for local people to be able to air and have their views recorded. Critical support for the scheme rather than an illusion that we residents have the final say...So structures for residents to oversee/ comment on this project and written agreements are needed.”

“This should include transparency. The maximum amount of information for residents.”

Appendix: materials presented to the second housing and communal space workshop

1) What is an affordable rent level?

- 10% of renters in Lambeth have household incomes of £10-15,000.
At £12,500 household income, max rent should be **£42.31/week**
- 10% of renters in Lambeth have household incomes of £15-20,000.
At £17,500 household income, max rent should be **£70.77/week**
- 10% of renters in Lambeth have household incomes of £20-25,000.
At £22,500 household income, max rent should be **£99.23/week**
- 9% of renters in Lambeth have household incomes of £25-30,000.
At £27,500 household income, max rent should be **£127.69/week**

(Based on assumption that rent should not take up more than 40% of total housing costs.)

2) Costs

Most housing associations borrow today against future income from rents and sales. Future income is affected by tenure mix, size of homes and the time set to pay back the original loan. The level of anticipated rental income determines how much money can be borrowed.

What does it cost to build a new home?	What income can it generate?
<p>£70,000 for a home for 2 people (50m²)</p> <p>£140,000 for home for 6 people (100m²)</p> <p>Different options change costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It costs £435,000 for 300m² • If self-finished = £304,500 • If self-procured= £210,000. <p>300m² could create:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 large homes for 6 people (18 people housed) • 4 smaller homes for 3 people (12 people housed) • 6 small homes for 2 people (12 people housed) 	<p>3 large 4 bed homes would generate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,800 if privately rented • £408 if social rented <p>4 smaller 2 bed homes would generate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,360 if privately rented • £544 if social rented <p>Based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Median average private rent for 4 bed in SW9 @ £600pw • Median average private rent for 2 bed in SW9 @ £340pw • Target rent for 4 bed @ £136/week • Target rent for 4 bed @ £103/week

3) The money

Government subsidy rules now tie housing subsidy to building homes at “affordable rent”, so less money is available from government than in past to support housing.

Potential other sources of “extra” funding for Somerleyton Road include:

- Asset transfer or endowment to a community trust
- S106 - planning obligations from developers
- CIL - community infrastructure levy
- Community share issue
- Service charge on residents and facilities/commercial users

4) Definitions

Tenure

Affordable housing: This is a catch-all term for all forms of housing provided for people at less than market cost.

This includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing (see below for details).

Social rented housing: This includes the majority of council owned and housing association owned homes.

All social rented housing is let at “guideline target rents” determined through the government’s national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing: this is let by local authorities, housing associations or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. It is let at higher rents than “target rents” under the new “affordable rent” regime.

Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing: is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing (eg “starter homes” that are lower cost because of their size or location) may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

What is “self build”?

This is where a group of people join forces and become involved in the planning, design and building of their own homes. The approach gives residents a greater say over the type and style of their home and community. It can also reduce the cost of purchasing a new home by removing the need for developers.

What is a “community land trust”?

They are non-profit, community-based organisations that develop housing, workspaces, community facilities or other assets that meet the needs of the community, are owned and controlled by the community and are made available at permanently affordable levels.

What is a community-led long-term management organisation?

This involves creating a new community organisation with specific responsibilities, like a development trust, community land trust or a co-op. These responsibilities might include maintenance of public space, management of community assets, and/or the delivery of local services. This task would otherwise be carried out by the local authority, a housing association, or a private company.

5) Scenarios

Scenario 1: Private developer led

- Land is sold to private developer by Lambeth Council
- Development is housing-led
- Housing tenure mix is 60% private/40% affordable, or 50/50% if grant funding is available
- Affordable housing is provided by a housing association offering social rent, affordable rent and intermediary housing
- Income from private housing subsidises provision of affordable housing

- Income from private housing funds investment in public realm and local facilities through planning obligations
- Income from private housing funds investment in a community-led long-term management organisation

This is the standard approach to developing this sort of site and will be LB Lambeth's first option.

Pros:

- 200-250 homes (up to 100-125 affordable)
- Mix of housing types
- Income from private housing subsidises affordable housing, public realm and local facilities (eg health and wellbeing centre, play spaces and greening activities, jobs and training programmes)
- Potential for planning obligations to fund a community-led long-term management organisation.

Cons:

- No council housing
- No community control over housing allocation policies or rent levels (though potential for Lambeth to adopt local lettings plan).
-

Scenario 2: Community developer

- Land is sold to community developer by Lambeth Council
- Land sale is financed from future rents
- 'Community developer' is a new non-profit limited company and registered housing association (could be a co-operative)
- Development plan is a combination of housing, community and commercial space
- Housing tenure is a mix of private and social, for sale and for rent
- Income from sale of private housing and future rents from commercial properties subsidise investments in public realm
- Community developer is in control of long-term management of the site so could allocate some space to self build

This is the model Brixton Green have been working on to date.

Pros:

- "Affordability" can reflect local median incomes
- Mix of housing types and tenures types
- Income from private housing subsidises affordable housing, public realm and local facilities (eg health and wellbeing centre, play spaces and greening activities, jobs and training programmes)

- More community control in short and long-term.

Cons:

- More housing to rent and lower rents means less construction - fewer homes and less local facilities
- Overall, site would have to be higher density to generate sufficient rental income to pay for build and management
- Development would be slower.

Scenario 3: Community Land Trust

- Land is sold/transferred to a Community Land Trust
- Site development is financed by capitalising on future rents from the site
- Community Land Trust holds land and housing in trust in perpetuity
- Development plan is a combination of housing and commercial assets
- Housing mix is combination of social rent and co-ownership
- Self build/self procure could be an option
- Income from future rents on housing and commercial properties subsidise housing
- Community developer is in control of long-term management of the site, housing allocations and rent levels

There are few examples of this model in cities in the UK.

Pros:

- “Affordability” can reflect local incomes
- Mix of housing types and tenures types determined by community
- Income from rents and commercial assets subsidises public realm and community programmes
- More community control in short and long-term
- Scope for co-ownership or self-build/self procurement.

Cons:

- Development takes much longer
- Far fewer new homes built (Any idea of numbers?)
- Less money to provide public realm and community facilities
- An untried model so more difficult to get support.

Scenario 4: Hybrid

- Land is sold to a private developer (eg housing association)
- Housing tenure mix is 60% private/40% affordable, or 50/50% if grant funding is available

- All/some affordable housing on the site is transferred to a community land trust
- Community Land Trust holds land and housing in trust in perpetuity
- Or social housing is built by the council
- Development plan is a combination of housing and commercial assets
- Community Land Trust is in control of affordable housing
- Private developer controls remainder of the site
- Community facilities could be managed and run by a local community trust.

There are different possibilities...

Pros:

- “Affordability” can reflect local median incomes
- Mix of housing types and tenures types determined by community
- Different permutations of landlords possible eg could include council housing
- Income from rents and commercial assets subsidises public realm and community programmes
- More community control in short and long-term
- Scope for co-ownership or self-build
- Scope for council to build.

Cons:

- Development takes longer
- Fewer new homes built
- Less money to provide public realm and community facilities.

Scenario 5: Council builds

This was suggested by some people at the workshop who preferred the idea of Lambeth developing the site, building homes that would be let by the council as social housing. Information about this, including pros and cons was not presented as for the other scenarios.

6) Benefits and trade offs

Option 1: Housing for rent that local people can afford

Benefits	Trade offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing that is affordable for people in Brixton • Rent that reflects local median incomes • Keep community benefit and value of development in the local area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More homes need to be built to increase rental income to make the scheme economically viable • No money generated for community facilities • No money generated to support wider costs of development (refuse etc)

Option 2: Secure, long-term tenancies for people who want them

Benefits	Trade offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security for tenants • Sense of fairness for people most in need • Stability for households, for children and adults • Supports wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer homes available for people who become in urgent need of housing over time • Fewer homes for people who are homeless or destitute in the future

Option 3: Co-ownership of housing

Benefits	Trade offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for rents to relate to incomes, eg maximum 40% of income to be spent on housing costs • Could be self-financing if mix of incomes/rent is right, and borrowing can be extended for 50-60 years • Potential for self-build and self-procurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to set out rules for being offered a home, and make sure they are fair and inclusive • Not everyone wants to live cooperatively, this could exclude some people in housing need • Decision making could become complicated if there's also a local management organisation

Option 4: Local facilities: shops, wellbeing centre and community spaces

Benefits	Trade offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality local facilities for residents • Bring people into the neighbourhood • Connects Somerleyton Road to other parts of Brixton • Rents from commercial uses can generate income for community uses • Costs very little to construct a shell for ground floor rental (for shops etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need capital to develop these facilities - eg through sale of private housing or through developer’s planning obligations (S106) • This means less investment in public realm and community facilities

Option 5: A mix of housing types and tenures

Benefits	Trade offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mix of housing types and tenures means a more diverse community - different backgrounds, life stages, income levels • Private home for sale can generate income to subsidise social housing for rent, public realm and local facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, less social or affordable housing to rent

Option 6: A mix of housing for families and people without children

Benefits	Trade offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a mixed and balanced community - different ages, different circumstances, different incomes levels • Mix of housing types than can allow people to stay in the community through different stages in their life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial disincentive to build bigger social homes • Smaller social housing properties generate more income than larger family homes • Larger private homes generate more income than smaller private homes



This report has been written by Social Life

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For more information about Social Life go to www.social-life.co