A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS

Economy Workshop
23rd November 2016, 9.30 – 13.00

Cultural and creative workspace
Table 9 Session 1

Facilitator in bold – facilitator comments in bold
Respondents in regular text

These notes are a summary of the conversation

Session 1, Table 9

Facilitator, Kirsten Dunne, Greater London Authority
Colette Kelly, Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Toby Laurent Belson, Brownbaby
Eliza Easton, Creative Industries Foundations
Alistair Aldous, University of the Arts London
Helen Smith, London Borough of Bexley
Jayne McCoy, London Borough of Sutton
Sven Muendner, Leitsystem
Hannah Barry, Hannah Barry Gallery

We have a set of questions laid out but I'm happy to be led by you guys. I think it would be good to hear everybody's views. Just starting on the first question, which I wanted to keep quite broad, around terminology, when we say 'culture and creative workspace', what do people think of, how useful is this term? What should it mean?

Arts, music, writing, dance, things that can be challenging to some people, things that can be offensive to some people, freedom of activity.

So a very broad range in terms of discipline. What about the nature of the activity itself?

There is an issue of defining creative industries. You can be talking about businesses with completely different workspace needs, that's why it's useful to define what part of the creative industry we're talking about.

In terms of the businesses we work with who are worried about space: freelancers, SMEs, they are finding it incredibly difficult to find space. Especially space with extra space for designers, people working with tools; they need double the square footage. And in addition, the public

arts and protecting that. And part of that, the nighttime economy, people who are threatened by other developments near them. Music industries, private buildings that are threatened.

So presentation spaces as well as production spaces.

That's a key consideration; not to separate but to recognise that there are different spaces required by creative industries as a whole. They have different requirements.

Flexibility.

It's no good making things and not showing them. You have mini different sorts of business. Video games are very different to visual arts and dance.

There's a lot of specificity, even there. We were looking at Fine Art studios; the different needs of different Fine Art practices are huge. We provide a lot of space for start-up and high-potential fashion businesses at UAL. Depending on where they are in terms of business development, they need different spaces. It helps to be as specific as possible here. And to talk about purpose; you have to work with developers and local councils, you have to understand they are looking to do certain things in terms of place-making, and you have to work with that grain and understand what they're trying to achieve in that development.

Academic institutions and place-making. Councils will be doing different things. It's about keeping the whole in mind at all time. Storing tools, exhibitions spaces which could be a public library, you know.

I have a problem with the definition of this space. People look at economic output and square footage. You need to look at physical definition of spaces. This is a very difficult way to quantify output. You need to recognise spaces are potentially being parts of a wider production change, or galleries might make people more likely to spend in the area.

The numbers are here: 80% of tourism comes from culture.

The emphasis seems to be on the presentation opportunity - the gallery, the theatre - rather than production. This might be because you can easily see the value of a presentation area. What you can't see as easily is the value of someone hammering away somewhere.

Again it goes back to the partnerships with universities. A lot of people go to Kingston Uni, do fashion, then as soon as they graduate they leave, because they can't afford the rent. We need to keep that creative talent within the Borough. We're trying to get a model together that would actually support that with market rents as they are. One of our developments is doing that, working with the university to keep that creative talent and grow it. It goes back to place-shaping. People come to Kingston to shop; they can't keep coming just for that. It's our creative innovation that's at the heart of it. Local authorities did look at galleries and theatres, but in order for that to be sustainable we need to give the artists spaces.

The presentation bit can be just about Night Time Economy. But the mix can be better for the area.

Artist workspaces in general are fairly closed off from local environments. People can't wonder in to see what's going on. Create London have very permeable spaces, people can go in and

buy stuff; it allows communication with the local area. The arts sector's non-presentation bit could look at more flexibility in terms of opening it up if there is a Local Authority Space.

An obligation?

Not an obligation, but arts and artists could learn from different parts of the sector.

We're talking about creativity but we've lost culture. Culture is not about selling things or making money, impressing other people, it's about life, what I'm seeing in West London, our culture is being crushed and seriously threatened - Carnival, reggae, funk music, writers, designers - they're all under serious threat in an area that is world-famous. Yet it's under serious threat, because people are looking at creativity and thinking money, money, money. I'm an artist; I don't want to be on display. Sometimes I want to make art that's just for me to sit and look at. I find other ways to bring value, working with schools. Culture is people's lives. Let's look at things that are already there.

Proximity to things happening are really important, the fact that artistic activity is in a place - that should be encouraged and protected. You have to start spending the culture sector a bit like the heritage sector - a preservation approach. I don't think it's all being instrumentalised, but there must be a way to preserve things. Someone was talking to me about ska music - how it was the music of protest. But where is the protest from culture in our moment? It's quite difficult to find it.

I wasn't saying all artist spaces should be open. But where it sometimes feels that a load of people are turning up and taking spaces, there are ways to integrate. It's working with schools too.

From a local authority perspective, we're trying to help facilitate. Narrow focus on creativity and buildings, we're trying to get away from that idea. Art happens in life. Going back to your original definition, it's a very broad because there are elements that are big business - TV, West End - but here we're talking about areas where there's no figure to put on the end of it. That's the problem we are facing, I'd like to think about ways of trying to address it. There's a fixation on theatres and galleries.

I like that work that they used in the presentation: the Mayor's responsibility to convene people. I think the responsibilities of creative industries and culture as a gathering force. In an age of austerity, where councils have a very difficult time, they can have a convening role. In Southwark that's the most useful thing we've received from the council, the knowledge banks and the convening. The connectivity.

What we're seeing in one part of the Borough is that there is an arts community that's grown up on its own; you can't force it to happen. There's a live music industry starting to bubble up, an arts community, it's happened on its own but we need to help with a tailored approach.

I'd be interested to hear our thoughts on cultural enterprise zones. Kingston is hopefully an opportunity area.

We can talk about that. Just very briefly on that, it dovetails with your point Hannah, it's about protection and recognising something that is growing and emerging, and making sure that it doesn't have to move somewhere else.

But to do it in an authentic way. You get NGOs, councils come in, they try to piggyback on a certain artistic area, they misunderstand it and make it inauthentic. You have to be very sensitive.

We are still fleshing out what this is going to look like. They will look different in different Boroughs. It has to be local. It has to be a partnership with local authorities, in my view, and with local organisations, but there have to be real commitments from a local authority perspective, to investing in something and keeping it.

Is there also an understanding on how they're led? Everything I do is community-led; we're battling hard with making them understand that, rather than the council holding your hand. No, we'll hold your hand. You can help, but we need to lead. Like community economic development plans, that are very specific that they can't be led by councils or outside planners. But we find resistance. It should empower local communities. I think it's rethinking those in a way that works for communities and artistic communities.

Definitely has to be bottom-up. Local authorities are the worst people to say what should happen. You don't want the cold hand of bureaucracy trying to be creative. But trying to put a value on that, we need to find a way of quantifying that that isn't just profits.

So can we talk about that? What does having creatives in an area contribute to that area? Not monetary value, we know there's a huge social impact, impacts on housing, gentrification, negative and positive.

It might be something that we can talk about. At the moment, artist spaces, they're not technically infrastructure according to the Mayor of London, if they were it would signal that they're part of the way that they exist. It would open them up to CIL funding. These things are so essential to the lifeblood of the city.

I like that!

Still raises the same question again; we know there's a requirement for culture, what is the argument when you're talking about schools, roads, houses, bus stops…

As someone from an Afro-Caribbean backgrounds, we're constantly told that we don't go to theatres and galleries. No, we just don't go to white theatres and galleries. Our bedrooms are our venues. How is that quantified?

Why is it being created in people's bedrooms? Is it affordability issues, or comfort, or..?

I think in many cases it's out of comfort. You have to look at technical changes. When I was younger a sampler cost £1500, now you can buy apps for £20-£30. A lot of those things. Having said that, there's a massive movement of live music that you're not doing in your bedroom. I'm about to do a residency in a library because I do quiet, contemplative work, but at the same time I work with children; that isn't going to work in a library. You need to get a handle on how wide this area is.

As the GLA, couldn't you try and work out how to understand this? We do need figures, in order to make cases to developers. This is from different contexts, there are a lot of people thinking about quantifying things that at first don't look quantifiable. There's lots of work; the GLA could coordinate a competition to ask people.

If you just asked people why they lived somewhere. It's going to be friends, family, community, culture.

What about the question of why they no longer live somewhere?

There's not a lack of evidence base. There's been a lot of research done across the world over the last 10 years.

Could I put across a problem? It comes back to this council issue. We have a Notting Hill Carnival Support Group. There's a committee deliberating on those things at the GLA, who runs it. Our local council has specifically asked: how do we make money for our coffers? Carnival brings £150 million to London: in line with most global carnivals. The council is saying, 'No, we don't make any of that money.' How do you get that specific number - in council tax or parking charge basically - how do you work out what goes into the council?

Given the national situation in terms of local government funding. We need an overall strategic approach. Within London, the Mayor's office is where that convening can happen. 'Yes I understand that you're under financial pressure, so you want to go for option A, but actually in terms of the interests of London we need to go for option B'.

So that brings us nicely into the London Plan. This is where we have an opportunity to influence infrastructure.

Something I've noticed - a soft measure - it's just stating an intention. 'London is open for business'. In my Borough we're just stating the intention that we want to bring in business. We've brought in millions. The Mayor is already sending a powerful message. Just by talking about art's importance and value - it's one of the key reasons people come to London as a cultural hub - just by talking them up and making sure that the Boroughs themselves are doing that in order to ensure that they're happy to spend money etc. Keeping saying that this is important. It filters down. Getting that message out there is one way of making people start valuing that.

Is there a way for the GLA to encourage councils to take more risk? And be more diverse in their thinking? How about making them try new stuff, encouraging difference in Boroughs. They ought to be trying approaches different to other Boroughs'. Is there something in the London Plan to encourage that?

There are certain areas for certain cultural activities. Just to highlight what's already there.

I'm wondering about the value of agglomeration, how important culture and networks are, the logic of putting something where there's nothing.

Just because there's nothing that one person sees. A dearth to one person may not be a dearth to anyone else. As someone into graffiti, it has huge value to me and people I live around. You need to be sensitive to what different people value. Poverty is bad. Economically poorer is not necessarily bad. I want to live but don't mind being on a lower income.

I've always thought that there could be some kind of system of celebrating or rewarding not just things that are truly excellent coming out of the woodwork, but the proximity of pride. If you had an award...

Like 'London Borough of Culture'!

It sounds cheesy. 'Most Innovative Education Programme'. 'Best Collaboration between a University and a Cultural Organisation'. Recognising it in London. We like to discover stuff. Through a system you could illuminate something. Awards are a way of doing that. I like to look at other people's work. I like to feel encouraged about best practice, 'Oh right that's a way of doing things I'd never thought of.' 'Break Through Bedroom Act Award,' I don't know. You could get Boroughs to showcase. There used to be that weird thing on Horseguard Parade, there used to be that inflatable structure. I think it was a British Council initiative. You could see innovative stuff from around the UK.

I do remember that!

It was really strange but you did learn a lot. Think about how brilliant the Clothes Show was in its heyday.

I'd be interested to see how the GLA will discover culture.

Why would the GLA do that? What's the usefulness of that?

Well how do you encourage others to discover?

That's it; we need to think about things on a strategic level. We know for instance there's a lack of workspace.

I would 50% agree with what you just said. You are going around the world and selling London as a fantastic lovely open city, in that sense you do need to know how you portray London, you need to know the most innovative things. There's huge suffering in the local Boroughs, the knowledge in the Boroughs that you can draw on, but there's less and less because there's nobody to attend events and discover them on a local level. Perhaps, as the GLA, you could fund that process, in the Borough, I don't know where they would be.

So we're talking about the people within local Boroughs with cultural hats on. Maybe there's less and less of that specialism.

Well there's the Cultural Forum which serves that purpose. It gatherers those people who fill some of those roles. We get together quarterly. There's that. We show best practice. An organisation of people who work with local authorities and creative industries.

How do you draw the knowledge? Could the GLA require local Boroughs to make a thorough diverse report on culture in their area? I know from lots of Boroughs, the first to go was the culture team.

I think that goes back – it isn't just the Boroughs who bring culture. But push it back out to the community. There's a balance there. We have an organisation called Creative Kingston, the council sit there as an equal partner, we're not driving it or delivering it. I would also say that a lot of housing staff and a lot of binmen went as well.

If, for the Mayor, culture is a priority, maybe cultural strategic partnerships, that old LSP model, if you map where there are different concentrations, you could see where it would be useful to have a strategic partnership, to preserve or address gaps. That's where the convening strategic role could be very useful.

I was just going to say I like the phrase 'the cold hand of bureaucracy'. But what can you do? Working in policy, how can you make things better, when you want to support it? One of the things I am thinking about is the night-time economy. We've got small fashion outlets, people saying they're desperately worried about the night-time economy in five years' time, these places may be closed. Something that would be great; business rates are completely linked to what's happening culturally. But we don't have an understanding of that relationship. That would be really powerful - regeneration teams saying 'this is why it's important' in terms of those stats, then we can leave the artists to get on with what they're really good at. The business rate is important.

The areas go up, but that's because of what's happening in the area. Artists and creatives who pay business rates because of what's going on culturally. It's interesting those are the businesses coming to us.

We have the opposite happening. Charities, because of the recalculation of business rates, if they happen to have been in Shoreditch for 10 years since the last calculation, are going to be in a lot of trouble. It will entirely depend on a case-by-case business.

Well we need to understand that better.

There's the ability to make exemptions. If you want to make discounts based on cultural value.

Potentially something like occupancy. A lot of companies, a lot of big universities have a CSR, a civic duty responsibility; universities are stakeholders that could take them in. We've done it for several different organisations, providing space for fledging organisations.

Universities have got a track record of incubation. But we have to plan for culture. We do have to plan for it.

One of my questions - this idea that the London Plan should have a specifically directed approach in the creative sector. Do we agree?

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Carefully plotted.

And how we can plan that locally? It goes back to your ground rules about Cultural Enterprise Zones. How we can make cultural infrastructure as well as physical infrastructure.

The CIL system works really well. Could one think about a cultural CIL that has a similar structure? Where an area can find a hit list of what they can do.

There was a moment when CIL was consulting. Did you participate in that?

It's an infrastructure levy. Public realm.

But it's usually art and infrastructure put at the bottom of the list.

No, no. It's moved on.

There's a Mayoral CIL too.

I think it'd be great if the GLA could do that convening role around cultural infrastructure.

The point I was making there was neighbourhood plans. They're not being made by communities.

There's been research on it, you'll find in general in Kensington and Chelsea, you have about 2 or 3 'assets of community value', in Camden they have 30ish. Something is going wrong there. The entire of Westminster is designated into neighbourhood plans. In Kensington and Chelsea there were only two. There's a drop off in support for what councils are offering. The guy running the forum educated the council on how to do it, they had no clue on localism, it's one thing when you have him, a trained planned and solicitor with a posh voice, but it's another thing with people from council estates being treated like dirt, around something that's meant to protect them. We need to know more about CIL from a community perspective. I worry that there's a Machiavellian thing going on, we don't want to give communities too much backing and too much oomph; you start going into devolution issues the more power people have over things.

It's also about managing expectations. There's the London Plan, it has to be in conformity with this and this. We need to manage expectations about what can be levied.

I want to go back to your point about graffiti. You value that and you know loads of people who do. I heard some stats about a Borough, where they spend £100,000s per year getting rid of graffiti in the same spot, and it's the same people who keep phoning up complaining. I want to know where are all you guys, where is the platform for your voices, combatting those three people who have that power? I'm not criticising that, but what's the tool we need so that they're recognised as much as the grumpy person?

It's about giving people a voice. If we're talking Carnival or graffiti. There are a tiny number of residents sick of their gardens getting pissed in, but millions of people who aren't being heard, and they love Carnival. It's about real community engagement, this whole process, I'll be frank I'm disappointed that there isn't that much community in this room.

I perceive the Night Time Czar as a positive thing. Bring it into the media. Do you think it was a good thing?

It comes back to what you were saying about intention. You're giving yourself something to live up to. You need start having those conversations about those things. As a process we're starting at a better place than we've ever seen.

Do you need a Creative Czar?

Amy genuinely knows the community. She can talk for everyone. With a Creative Czar, how would they be engaged with everything?

Is there a way in which the GLA could identify what are felt to be wicked social problems, or difficult sticky issues, and going out to that knowledge base? There's a lot that could be tracked out to Boroughs.

The London Science Gallery goes out into the community, using it its widest possible interpretation of community, and programming via that. It includes open calls. It's brilliant.

The GLA won't have a pot of money to do that, but they can convene.

But there's a lot of money out there!

Table 9 Session 2
Cultural and creative workspace

Facilitator in bold – facilitator comments in bold
Respondents in regular text

Session 2, Table 9

Facilitator, Kirsten Dunne, Greater London Authority
Laura Hills, London Borough of Southwark
Martin Cowie, Greater London Authority
Jamie Saddler, London Councils
Nina Miles, City of Westminster
Michael Palmer, Dharart Ltd
Hannah Barry, Hannah Barry Gallery

We're talking about culture and creative workspace in this workshop. Maybe we could start by going around and talking about what everybody's interest is.

I think creative and cultural workspace is becoming a hot topic; it's really growing in London. We should be encouraging and supporting it as local authorities. We've got a big cultural sector in Peckham and, at the end of Old Kent Road, we have a lot of artist spaces there, around Camberwell and Elephant and Castle too. But it doesn't necessary fit into employment 'B-class use' workspace; we need to work out how many jobs are generated, whether artists' jobs are a main job for people working there, to understand really how we can support it. We're looking at lots of different workspace providers. We have a list from Southwark, so far on the list they've all been artist studios, so there's big demand in the Borough.

It's reflecting an increasingly diverse group and need. It's increasingly important to make provision, whether that's provision or promotion of skills, or interest in doing so. My interest is the London Plan, how we can do more across London and particularly in outer London. I am interested to know how we can promote the agenda, not just making provision for it

I guess my interest is somewhat similar again. I work on Culture Policy for London Councils. In particular, creative workspaces not being sacrificed for housing. We need to make somewhere people actually want to live. It's very positive that it's on that agenda, now we need to work out what we mean by creative spaces, beyond any bricks and mortar definition.

We have lots of uses in Westminster, particularly around the West End. There's the competitiveness agenda, we have to keep the talent. It's linked to quality of life, particularly where housing can push everything else out. Land values in Westminster tend to dominate.

Business rates will be a big thing for you.

Yes.

My observations on cultural and creative workspaces, the whole idea of conglomeration rests on how the creative and commercial and culture section works and interlinks between them. It's not just individual artists; if you have a production in the West End, there are lots of things

going on outside of that: production support, rehearsal studios, catering support, casting, and marketing. And when those related industries are clustered, so you don't just put 20 artists together, but when you make the links across the sectors, to promote or support via databases. Where you can get certain artists or engineers etc. You will find that the immense increase in productivity that occurs is phenomenal.

I've had some interesting conversations with recording studios in Soho. When they get a big Hollywood contract, they share it out. They work together. The difficulties they face, where there's lots of construction and noise, that will have impacts on how attractive the area will continue to be. We've introduced a code of construction practice to suit that business. It's knowing that and having those conversations.

My interest is the role of cultural creative space in the 21st century, and the civic opportunity, to gather people together. Practitioners, audiences, all the things around it. And the systems of opportunity that can exist within culture spaces.

We didn't get to grips with this in the last group: I want to look at what does having artists and creative in an area can do to that area? You mentioned employment numbers, but many of those artists will be self-employed people who will never grow as traditional businesses. But they will have a network of contacts. That is how work is developing, how work practice is changing. Those employment figures are always going to be a frustrating experience. What are the other values they think people are seeing? Maybe we could start in Old Kent Road and Peckham?

It makes for interesting places. Development opportunities bringing new housing and new facilities, perhaps some of that could draw on the existing cultural networks in those areas, that's what makes those areas distinctive. That's not just creating new spaces, there's something about those areas that makes them interesting from a cultural perspective, depending on the type of work that's produced. There is also public art and that kind of thing. It's important that this distinctiveness isn't lost, especially where there are big changes anticipated.

The biggest impact is the increase of house prices! It all of a sudden it becomes a cool and trendy place to live. I've seen it happen in different parts of London. It adds to cultural distinctiveness. It's hard to define but it adds to a quality of life. It adds to the night-time economy. It adds to economic output.

How would you say quality of life is improved?

Diversity of activities, diversities of ideas. You don't need to go to an exhibition at the Tate if you can get the same sort of thought-provoking interaction with local artists exhibiting in the pub. You can still engage.

Accessibility to local people. Some people may not go into the Tate, but they would go to some pop-up round the corner, and take their children.

And that often triggers connections with other local cultural events, which enriches the local quality of life. It's hard to describe.

I think also if you think about everyday life, what most people are engaged with all the time, pedestrian life, a commute of some sort, there are characteristics of that commute wherever you do it, I think increasingly artists are thinking that it's no longer just about working in

galleries. I think a lot about architecture and great design. There are ways that all these disciplines can intervene in pedestrian life. If somebody actually thinks about the railway station, how I go in, where I do I pick up my *Metro*. Not everything has to go crazy in the local commute, but there are differences. I had to make communications through West Ham and I thought, 'What a great station'. Someone has thought about the benches. I'm a great fan of Peckham, but... compared to the lack of thought that goes into other places, there is a difference in your wellbeing.

We're talking about 2 different things: artistic intervention across public life and, on the other hand, the simple existence of artists in a community. Let's take artist studios, a building of artists where they go to work rather than exhibit. What's the benefit?

Resilience. Bringing that other dimension that could be squeezed out by office rents and big retail.

The other bit thing is tourism and exports.

It brings enrichment to your life that could be squeezed out; it's attractive to the kind of people you want to be attracted to London.

Providing aspiration is very important. I think about that a lot in Peckham. Everyone in the street wishes they were a rap star or sneaker designer. Proximity to people a step or two ahead is important.

It's also about community as well. If you've got some artistic workspace in a specific area, anything they do, people can begin to take pride in that, build partnerships with those people, if the Tate decides to do something in an area, that's done *to* you. It's not the same.

Grassroots.

They help to build conversations and dialogues in communities. Yes, artists and creative people located in a place do engage a lot more with the local community.

Do you think that's a wide perception? I sometimes feel that when people think about culture and creative workspaces, they're thinking about presentation spaces, venues, they're not thinking about all the stuff that needs to happen in the background somewhere. Do you think those connections are valued and widely understood?

I don't think it's widely understood. Understanding the breadth and depth, if you had a spider web of 'This is the Tate, this is how it links with all the goods and services that come in to create the installations, logistics, security', West End productions too, where there are so many linkages.

You could map the investments made by a cultural space into all of those services. Even from the point of view in a young artist, it would be the same.

As importantly, they're also leading workshops at the Tate, they're leading art in schools, they're only doing that because they have a studio somewhere and are keeping their practice affordable. It isn't about creating new jobs but it's about keeping an ethos alive.

It's about keeping London ahead of the game. I think it's a much broader range of potential industries, someone working on their laptop at home; they won't necessarily develop in industry. It's a much broader definition when we talk about creativity. It's more about entrepreneurship on every level. That sense that London has its finger on the pulse.

It's also a problem there to be solved, a city filled with problem solving people

The creativity filters down. It's the Art Director, the Fashion Designer; they'll give it to a designer who has to make it a reality, and in doing so that designer will innovate, will come up with new ways of working with materials because they have the impetus and the push. On the one hand you have the aspirational pull, and also aspirational demands from industries. They demand from their suppliers something different.

So, thinking about the London Plan, how do we plan for that?

I think it's raising awareness of cultural industries, how much London is a city of culture as a whole and a culture-provider, a network of all these different bits and pieces, it's not just about the presentation pieces as you're saying. It's about the basements in Soho, the backstreet garages. It's understanding that, understanding it's an agglomeration. In terms of policy, raise awareness of links and you raise awareness of what policy is needed and what agglomerations are needed. The problem with agglomeration is that as soon as you bring lots of people in, costs of services and land goes up. Making clusters of creative spaces.

So securing a level of affordable space, so the people that brought it along don't get moved out.

Some sort of progressive protection-style policy.

All the Boroughs want to be the next creative hub, because they want to be the next thing, and money might be part of it.

The policy can enable that. Everyone wants it, we struggle to capture it, do we fully understand what the qualitative benefits are? Get a wider community behind it. I think we don't fully understand the creative cultural industries. We don't tend to break it down.

Can I ask for a 2-minute diversion? How many around this table know about e-sports? You do, you don't, you don't, okay. These are gaming tournaments that people watch. We have a company that helps games companies promote and innovate their games, these are free-to-play games, not free-to-win games (you have to buy your various bits), but they put on these tournaments. Their viewing online is higher than *X-Factor*. They have stars. It's a small company in Peckham. They're the only company to book out Comicon. Comicon is the only thing that books out whole XL Conference Space in one go. And these guys have the biggest space within Comicon. There are 12 of them running it out of a warehouse in Peckham.

It's not physical space.

It's creative and cultural. And it's real value. Prizes in these tournaments are £200,000–£300,000.

We need to work out exactly what cultural and creative space is, so we can encourage and protect it.

My view is you shouldn't try to divorce one aspect of it from another. My concern sometimes is that you've got a particular type of provider on there, if you were to exclusively to provide x-type of space, very often a local authority would go for a more commercial end of that. My concern there is that you're cherry picking the bit you like and the bit that works economically, but you're disregarding the thing you don't like that is asking for a cheaper space, and you're forgetting it's a totally interconnected space. It may work like that in individual areas, but from my perspective across London that's an unmitigated disaster. How can it play out on a more local Borough level?

So we do need to define it. So local Boroughs can tap into it.

Someone on the other table was talking about Fintech. They thought it would be useful if the GLA talked to those consultants who are helping companies relocate. There are companies saying, 'You should go to Croydon', etc. If that work could be done, Boroughs could play more to their strengths.

You know we're working on the idea of a cultural infrastructure plan, which has never been done. A mapping is the first thing we need to do, so we understand what's there.

It's about affordability.

My instinct is it's about affordability and networks, companies are looking at that rather than specific locations.

So you've got some elements of control over land use, affordability but you've got your other strategies as well. Virtual space.

The digital approach and promoting that as well as physical space.

What I was trying to point out with the e-sports is that the majority of cultural production these days is virtual and digital.

I disagree with that wholeheartedly. Do you have any statistics?

If you look at the Tate, people are enjoying what's in the Tate via the web far more than physical visitors.

The Tate has 5 million visitors per year. I don't know what their online figures are, but...

I would argue that the Tate and most other innovative organisations are highly focussed on supporting artists to make content onsite and to broadcast that material to the world. A global audience is very interesting. I wouldn't say that you could use the word 'export'. Content online is not the bigger drive of audiences online, but content onsite. I'm going to sound like a purist here, I've not seen in any virtual or other world a replacement to the encounter of a great work of art in front of you.

And they're doing it online to drive people to visit it anyway.

Global audiences are very important to cultural organisations. But it's not about stuff being produced online.

We've also got two different things, a market that's very strong. Lots and lots of people viewing work for free or a very low price. On the other hand, you've got a high-end luxury market, lots of art sits there. In terms of purchasing power, you're looking at a very low number of people. The art market is worth £45 billion per year. That has to be equivalent to the games industry. London is known as a centre for high-end luxury goods.

The missing link we haven't talked about is philanthropy. There's the high net-worth individual, then there are the proximity of those people to arts organisations in the city, and trying to encourage a culture of philanthropy, that helps people put money into helping others as well as getting goods for themselves. There was an article in the NYT about philanthropy, many people in the tech world who are very philanthropic, how many of these people are creating their own thing, and not helping something that already exists. The Tate does need increasing amounts of money. It's an interesting ecosystem where there are some missing links.

This is very Westminster, so I apologise, we've just done a revision to our plan about special planning areas, Savile Row Tailors, galleries in Mayfair, its retail to the luxury end of the market, bespoke type retail. We've put in place policies to protect those. If a space is to be redeveloped, they would be expected to provide new space for a similar occupier or ideally the same occupier.

On the musical side, you have so many aspiring musicians, a lot of them occupy studios, they feed work into Soho production units, a lot of them will release their music online or sell it for pennies in the hope they are picked up and promoted by a record label and get gigs. Their income is going around in live shows, their online presence is just the same as the Tate, they put themselves online so people will want to come and see them. The spaces when we talk about the Tate and so on, is that it's a permanent space, but it's a production space. By having an add-on website, you're making an additional online presence.

A shop window.

A shop window. It's not just 'come and see the creativity'. You're spending money to bring people in to see it.

It builds on the need for connectivity. Well networked, digital connectivity enables that. It enables your gaming too.

Just to take us back to the planning. For you guys, from a local authority perspective, what would be helpful for the London Plan?

One of the things we're grappling with is whether we should designate different sectors in those areas, through policy we're trying to promote creative and cultural workhouse, do we need to be more specific in those spaces? The converse argument is that you'd be encouraging one area that discourages other sectors?

Would that discourage other sectors?

It could do, yes. It's market-driven…

Why does it have to be market driven?

It doesn't have to be.

You don't have enough evidence to say what you want to do.

What scale is the area? Maybe you should look at what's there already.

If Old Kent Road already has factor 10, is that not already a designation? In the same way as Savile Row, that's an SPA.

The local authority has to be clear with what it wants. Most Boroughs are floundering; they don't have the research to know.

I think the danger of trying to define artists' space is you then have to define what is art and what is the creative sector. As soon as you do that, you're saying what it is not. When someone innovates and links to the creative industry, they may not qualify for cheaper workspace. Where do you draw the line?

You've got to look at it in 2 different ways. A policy for affordable workspace more generally, then maybe a policy to attract a particular industry. Maybe splitting it up. If you have a general policy it means you could have anyone and anything.

But you still need to have an idea.

It comes back to that mapping.

I wonder if maybe there is a strategic role that someone in London could play, in helping Boroughs not identify themselves in terms of what they have. If Croydon goes down the route that they're going to be, the tech hub in the south, make sure they're linked up to somewhere else.

There's one situation that's developed about film - which is very desirable for everyone. There's going to be a big production space in Dagenham. That's going hand in hand with other areas, how those things best complement each other in different Boroughs. Ideally you'd have that level of information.

A recipe for change that Boroughs can tap into. So they can best understand what their strengths are.

I'm just thinking about Southwark - there's a huge artistic population. There was an example in Montreal, in downtown in Montreal it had the highest proportion of artists in all of Canada. They recognised that there was a thing through this census. They then put a whole load of protective measures in place to make sure they didn't lose it in the face of rising property values. I also just wanted to say that, in terms of scale, that really helps. All of this area is going to be developed. You could then look at a blended rent system and achieve value. Your game designers who can make more money versus the struggling visual artist. Look at that idea of blending. But how do we communicate those examples?

Land values.

It could be policy.

You could have credit, a credit mechanism. You could commission some smaller affordable space off the back of it.

That's crudely how it works now, how the Mayor is promoting affordable workspace, but it's a bit ad-hoc and random. We have to help Boroughs understand what it is they want.

Is the answer to have a requirement around a Borough-wide strategy?

Almost, yes. There are parts of London that don't tap into it.

The strategy shouldn't just be looking at land use, but it begins with what exists in the Borough. This exists, how do we support it. It might not be workspace, but better signposting on roads. Identifying the arts quarter. In infrastructure, within the Borough, even if it's on a website it will be picked up by Google.

You've got to promote that interest.

But also - every Borough, there are lots of regular working class people who don't want to move; they have a view about the sort of cultural facilities and infrastructure they want. Some Boroughs are doing very big consultations with wide ranges of the community.