

Meanwhile Use London

A Research Report For
The Greater London Authority

November 2020

FOREWORD

This report comes at a time of unprecedented crisis for London. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the lives of all Londoners. Thousands of people in our city have died, and many more suffered health and economic impacts from the effects of Coronavirus. The virus, and the social isolation and lockdown measures required to contain its spread, severely disrupted our ways of life, with major consequences for our city's economy and for the wellbeing of Londoners. Critically, it had a disproportionate effect on some of our city's most vulnerable people, communities and businesses, further exacerbating deep-seated inequalities within the capital.

Despite this, London remains a resilient city. We have a history of recovering and overcoming a range of challenging events – from plagues to fire, the Blitz terror attacks and financial crises – to become the diverse and successful global city we are today. Coronavirus is, once again, testing the resilience of our people, our businesses and our institutions. To move beyond this crisis will be an enormous task, which can only be achieved with all sectors in society working together – from the Mayor, local and central government, to individual Londoners and the broader Civil Society.

To be resilient is to build back better. London must aim to come out of this crisis not only with a thriving economy but with a fairer and more inclusive one. We should become a greener city, with more resilient communities and a healthier environment for all Londoners. If we succeed, we will be stronger and better prepared to face future shocks and stresses.

The London City Resilience Strategy, published in February 2020, offers a vision and a pathway for a more resilient London. Among its 21 cross-cutting actions, the Strategy recognises the role that meanwhile use activities can play in improving London's resilience by addressing some of the city's most pressing challenges. Meanwhile use interventions can take many forms, from temporary community and recreational activities, to arts, culture and commercial uses in empty plots of land or vacant high-street properties. As this report illustrates very well, London has already seen a wide range of meanwhile use activities – some quite innovative – over recent years.

To be resilient, meanwhile use initiatives must be designed and delivered in a way that creates real value for local communities, and that ensures these benefits are long-lasting, even where the initial activity is time-bound. This report is the first step to achieving this goal. Arup has produced a comprehensive piece of research on meanwhile activity in London in all its diversity, mapping key stakeholders and business models, and identifying relevant challenges. This research is illustrated with a range of real examples and success stories. With this report, the GLA has another useful tool to inform future policies and interventions that can help build resilience in London as we start our road to economic and social recovery from the Covid-19 crisis.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How we develop a city has profound impacts on the built environment, economic values and people's health, well-being and social justness. The problem we face is that contemporary methods and standardised models of development often fail to deliver the short-term and longer-term benefits we need and this has created a lack of trust between communities, planners, the market and the development sector.

It is within this context that meanwhile uses have increased in practice and popularity across London, and globally, by deploying innovative and temporary interventions as a way of dealing with urban change and delivering social value and other key benefits to the community. This is further evidenced in the context of Covid-19 and how cities have quickly mobilised by bringing forward meanwhile uses. However, meanwhile uses remain an emerging phenomenon and there is no agreed approach to meanwhile uses in London regarding governance, policy and decision-making. There is no agreed definition as to what meanwhile means, how it should be applied and what is expected from its operation.

This report, through a range of stakeholder interviews and case studies, examines the existing context of meanwhile uses in London, its challenges and opportunities and how the practice can be better supported, and its valuable assets and outcomes recognised and harnessed. It makes clear that there is a major gap in recognising the wider social value and potential of meanwhile uses to deliver participative, innovative and resilience-building solutions. The report also outlines the key relationships between meanwhile uses and their ability to deliver on the resilience agenda. It illustrates how meanwhile uses have the capacity and flexibility to support, facilitate and implement many of the GLA's principles of Good Growth by making the best use of land, delivering social outcomes such as neighbourliness and community support, supporting environmental objectives such as improving health and wellbeing and fostering growth of start-up and scale-up businesses.

The report evidences examples of good practice, including examples that have emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic, but highlights there is much more that can be achieved in addressing some of the city's pressing challenges, and in delivering urban resilience benefits. It serves as an evidence base to support the GLA's approach to meanwhile use that not only provides further encouragement of the practice but fundamentally outlines the core principles of implementing meanwhile uses. These are twofold:

To maximise social value and benefits to local communities; and

To ensure these benefits are efficiently and effectively delivered to address short-term need but also construct a long-term legacy.

The report provides a meanwhile use framework for improving current and future practice and concludes with recommendations for the GLA which focus on supporting a resilient meanwhile use framework. These are explained as key recommendations (focus areas and short-term actions for the GLA) and are supported by a number of secondary recommendations that can be implemented in the longer term.

The key recommendations are:

1

Provision of best practice guidance – The GLA should publish a good practice guide on meanwhile use in London, similar to the Mayor’s Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration (Feb 2018). This guide should set out key principles and make clear the linkages to other Mayoral policy priorities.

2

Sites and interested parties – The GLA should work with Boroughs to create a database of sites and underused / vacant buildings with community groups and other actors expressing interest in meanwhile uses.

4

Business support – the GLA should provide support and links to help meanwhile businesses develop models that are sustainable in operation and have a positive legacy.

3

Meanwhile use actors – The GLA and Boroughs should maintain a register of actors and organisations that can facilitate meanwhile uses and ensure these individuals and groups are kept up to date with policy ambitions and best practice from across London.

5

Signposting existing and developing new funding streams – The GLA and Boroughs should promote existing funds that can support meanwhile uses and consider where new funds could be established. Projects should address local, socioeconomic, and sustainability challenges.

Secondary recommendations are summarised as:

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- Work with local authorities to ensure every **Borough has an identified point of contact**, either provided by the GLA or at a local authority level to support the development of meanwhile spaces in the Borough.

GREATER ADVOCACY

- **Story telling.** There is no shortage of creative talent in London. The GLA could think about more innovative and multi-platform ways to tell stories about the benefits of meanwhile use in London. This might include social media campaigns tying in the numerous actors already working in this area in London, but it could include exhibitions in, for example, City Hall or the Building Centre or a collaboration with the Evening Standard.
- **Celebrating best practice.** The GLA could produce an annual compendium of the best examples of meanwhile space in London, perhaps run hand in hand with an awards night.
- **Competitions.** The wider GLA group (including TFL) are actively looking to exploit their land holdings for wider use. There could be an opportunity, working through or with other partners to make these sites subject to community competitions to encourage ideas and applications for viable meanwhile uses.

PLANNING

- **Meanwhile Use Policy within Local Plans.** There is opportunity for the GLA to encourage local authorities to include new policy and guidance around meanwhile or temporary uses and vacant sites when reviewing local plans.
- **Use of planning conditions and obligations.** In addition, as part of Local Plan reviews, local authorities could be encouraged to identify within their Local Plans where impacts of development could be mitigated through section 106 agreements, where they may not otherwise be secured through a planning condition.
- **Strengthen existing policies.** There is potential to enhance supporting text of existing policies to further encourage the use of meanwhile use and inform how it should be implemented. The GLA and local authorities could seek to modify the supporting text of certain policies within local plans by way of a minor modification to refer to the meanwhile use.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- Work with **Boroughs to develop a suite of training and communication materials** for engaging with community groups, businesses and citizens. This is to support advocacy and learning and catalyse communities to come forward with project ideas, but it will also support business resilience for SME businesses working in the meanwhile space.

FUNDING

- The GLA and local councils could provide **mechanisms and incentives for land and property owners** to allow meanwhile uses. Greater transparency on land ownership would lead to easier engagement with owners of vacant land for meanwhile uses.
- The GLA and councils could provide support, credibility and visibility to those meanwhile projects that rely partly on **participative funding and financing tools**. Crowdfunding provides operators with affordable options to access funds with the added benefit of creating a bond between a meanwhile use and its future users and neighbours, early on in the development and implementation of a project.
- Boroughs **could** incorporate the funding of meanwhile uses into their **s106 agreements with developers, or use CIL funds** to contribute to enabling early infrastructure provision for meanwhile uses.

DIGITAL TOOLS

- Create a **monitoring tool**. When meanwhile uses are created, data should be collected on impacts to provide metrics for evaluation and to support future business cases.



Pop Brixton Square, ©Make Shift

01

Introduction

A GROWING PRACTICE

Vacant or under-utilised land and buildings are scattered across the city. This is due to multiple and often complex reasons but can often be costly, unattractive and overlooks a valuable opportunity: to temporarily activate the space through a range of meanwhile uses to maximise social value and facilitate a positive legacy.

The temporary use of space has always occurred in cities across the world (Talen, 2012). However, the meanwhile use (defined below) of vacant land and property is rapidly growing in popularity and practice in London. This is largely due to profound changes that have occurred in the 21st Century city. Changing perceptions of and reactions to cultural, political and economic issues and growing technological trends call for creative solutions to ever more complex urban environments, and where the numerous benefits of meanwhile uses are being realised.

In London, the delivery of meanwhile uses has really grown over the last decade and incorporates a range of actors, including policy makers and politicians, community activists, charities, academics and entrepreneurs, amongst others. The implementation of meanwhile uses across London has also seen a steep rise during the Covid-19 lockdown and as a response to the pandemic as we re-imagine urban spaces to meet changing needs. It has grown in popularity as projects have continually demonstrated how the meanwhile use of vacant space can **drive economic outputs, increase positive environmental impacts and deliver social value** for the actors and communities involved.

In this report, all three of the above benefits are considered, but a focus on the **delivery of greater social value** is provided. This is because social systems, just as much as physical systems, are crucial for the resilience of cities. The report acknowledges that meanwhile uses, though they may be small relative to the longer-term development of the city, they are not insignificant. Rather, the small-scale and temporary nature of meanwhile use is extremely influential in the incremental and transitional development of the city; innovatively, efficiently and effectively informing the spatial and social outcomes. Although meanwhile uses may inherently be temporary in nature, if delivered successfully through addressing specific social need, they can be the catalysts of profound lasting legacies.

RESEARCH SCOPE

London was selected as one of the cities to join the 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) network. 100RC provided support and technical assistance to the cities to enable them to develop their City Resilience Strategies. 100RC have created a methodology for all cities within the network to use in the development of their City Resilience Strategies. The first output by the city is a Preliminary Resilience Assessment (PRA) that outlines the city's resilience strengths and weaknesses and possible areas for further exploration.

Meanwhile use was identified within the London Preliminary Resilience Assessment as a theme that has a greater potential to address London's resilience challenges.

Arup were commissioned by 100 Resilient Cities as a Strategy Partner to work with Greater London Authority's Resilience Team to consider opportunities to enhance London's resilience, with a specific focus on meanwhile use.

This report, through desktop research, a range of stakeholder interviews and case studies, examines the existing context of meanwhile use projects in London, their challenges and opportunities and how the practice can be better supported so that potential benefits are delivered in practice. It also provides a brief review of meanwhile practice in London within the Covid-19 context.

Based on the research, a framework is developed for meanwhile uses in London to support the city in addressing some of its pressing challenges, and in delivering urban resilience benefits, with a focus on social value.

The recommendations and solutions presented in this report have supported and informed the development of London's resilience strategy (Action B2: Encouraging Meanwhile Space - https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_city_resilience_strategy_2020_digital.pdf).

Further consultation is needed to build consensus around the recommendations in this report, including an approach for short-listing and prioritising the suggested recommendations. This process will be informed by a broader discussion considering stakeholder alignment, potential partnership opportunities and political support.

DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Although temporary uses have existed globally for many years, there is no clear and agreed definition. Whether referred to as meanwhile, interim, pop-up or DIY, to name a few, it is a term that can have different meanings to different people and disciplines.

For this report, we refer to meanwhile uses. A term that has been commonly adopted in London, and the rest of the UK, to describe an interim practice. We have defined meanwhile use as follows:

Meanwhile use

A “meanwhile use” describes a situation where a site is utilised for a duration of time before it is turned into a more permanent end state, taking advantage of a short window of opportunity. Meanwhile interventions are tactical and slot into wider strategies of planned change. They can help in shaping positive urban transformation.

We *evidence* the transitional nature of meanwhile uses within urban development, where its primary purpose is to deliver benefits to the community through predominantly social outcomes as well as economic and environmental. It is not exclusive of its users but inclusive of social need; it delivers social value, informs longer-term development and drives a new vision of city making. We refer to this as ‘transitional urbanism’, which we define as follows:

Transitional urbanism

A collective urban activation strategy that optimises the use of un-used or under-utilised land and buildings in cities to address a social, environmental or economic need to achieve a common end goal. It refers to the transition of a place, its use, its relationship and connection to the neighbouring community as well as its future.

Our research and meanwhile use framework refers to several terms, which we define as follows:

1 KEY ROLES

These are further developed in the meanwhile use ecosystem included in section 5 but these descriptions intend to set the scene identifying the actors involved in the meanwhile use.



Idea generator

is an actor who has an idea for the use of the space.



Funder

is an actor who provides funding for the meanwhile project.



Space provider

is an actor who provides the space for the project.



Recipient/Beneficiary

is the actor who will benefit from the social outcomes of the project.



Enabler

is an actor who has previous experience in meanwhile projects, and who is directly involved in the initiation and activation of the project, and in many instances, its operation and maintenance.



Facilitator

is a proposed actor who assists and provides guidance in the initiation of the project, without being directly involved in the process.



Decision maker

is an actor who provides the approvals required for the meanwhile projects throughout the process.

2 SPACE

The focus of this work is vacant open spaces, but the framework acknowledges the opportunity to explore wider locations as per the examples below:

Vacant open space

A piece of land in the urban context that is planned to be developed.

Vacant building

A building that is abandoned or unused, but it has all the services in place and can be used with little investment.

Vacant space in a building

A specific area in a building that could be repurposed, e.g. a rooftop that could be used for a temporary garden.

Carved space

A space within a construction site that is not in use and could be carved out during a specific period of time.

Public space

This could be any space in the city that could be occupied by a meanwhile use for a very short timeframe, e.g. a square, a parking space.

3 TIMEFRAME

The timeframe for the meanwhile use usually varies from less than 28 days up to 5 years, however can operate for longer and in some instances transition into permanent uses.

4 FUNDS

The investment required to initiate, construct and operate the meanwhile use. Commonly, these could be grants, donations, crowdfunding, financing or investment initiatives. These will inform the business models described later in section 5.

We recognise that there are opportunities for meanwhile uses across vacant sites as well as within buildings (e.g. retail units and employment floorspace). However, this study focuses primarily on meanwhile uses on vacant land.



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Desk-based research



Peckham Levels, ©Make Shift

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meanwhile, as a sub-category within temporary practice

According to the NLA (New London Architecture), temporary urbanism encompasses projects “that embrace the city as a work in progress, enlivening spaces, places and high streets over a short-term period, while supporting long-term ambition” . In its simplest definition, temporary urbanism creates time-limited projects - with a temporary status of occupancy - as opposed to permanent ones. This can happen in various types of vacant spaces: shops, buildings, empty public or private space or even in the streets. Temporary projects occurring while future development is in progress adds a new layer to this basic definition. This creates a new sub-category of temporary practice: the meanwhile or interim use of space. Although meanwhile projects may be temporary in nature, they are distinct in that they occur on land that has a finite period with which to fill the vacancy and will not always be available.

Many meanwhile projects are short-term in practice but apply a longer-term ambition, and subsequently instil a ‘legacy’ that lives beyond their meanwhile use. This is progressively becoming a key element in making the case for meanwhile uses on vacant land or within vacant buildings. Whether it is a transitional step toward completion of a permanent site or meeting a social need that is unfulfilled by the conventional market, meanwhile projects are no longer only filling a gap, but driving a longer-term financial, environmental and/or social objective.

The evolution of meanwhile uses in the city

Implementing temporary projects in vacant buildings awaiting a permanent use first emerged in Europe in the 1970s, at a time when deindustrialisation left hundreds of buildings empty in the city (Andres, 2013). Ever since, temporary initiatives have evolved to become in more recent times a tool of urban renewal and regeneration. As the 21st Century has been characterised by economic downturns and political changes under “austerity urbanism” (Tonkiss, 2013), low-budget temporary solutions have developed at an increasing pace as a response.

In the UK, projects were first referred to as ‘meanwhile’ rather than ‘temporary’ in the 2010s. According to Diguët and Ziegler (2017) in a report published by the Paris Region Development and Urban Planning Institute, three factors have encouraged the development of meanwhile projects in recent times:

- Urban property prices have increased. Therefore, anything bringing short-term revenues or in the longer-term enhancing the value of the land while it is vacant is desirable.
- The average duration of urban construction projects has increased due to increased scale or complexity of projects. Therefore, some large spaces are left vacant while others are being built out.
- New economic trade-offs have emerged including the need to occupy a space to dissuade unwanted uses, such as the case of squatters studied by Klein (2017) in a paper called “Understanding the cost of abandoned properties”.

In line with this growing phenomenon, cities have witnessed a third evolution of temporary projects in the last five years or so. Meanwhile projects are not only increasing in frequency but also in scale and quality. As more and more professional practitioners emerge in a new meanwhile market, it is increasingly becoming an accepted part of the development process. During this period, consideration and planning for a meanwhile legacy has also become more prominent as the value of meanwhile as an integrated development tool is realised and the relationship between early place-making and increased land value is established.

This has subsequently created an emerging market of meanwhile businesses, fuelled by the success of high-profile projects, strengthened place identity, higher land values and, more frequently, the recognised social benefits of such uses for existing communities. Entrepreneurs have seen an increasing demand from land owners and developers to accommodate meanwhile uses on their sites, creating business opportunities and a more commercially-focused practice.

In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, meanwhile uses have been used by many different actors and across many different sectors to respond to immediate needs of London’s citizens. The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated how the flexibility and adaptability provided by meanwhile interventions enables a rapid response to pressing social and economic needs within a crisis. These interventions can have profound long-term transformational qualities.

Nevertheless, despite this increase in meanwhile uses, it is still not as popular on vacant parcels as might be expected. According to Centre for London (2018), the reason behind this is that “landowners [still] often overestimate the risks and undervalue the benefits of giving over a site to meanwhile use”. This is largely due to a lack of guidance, policy direction and wider acceptance of meanwhile as a valid development tool.

Meanwhile as a resilience solution to adapt the city to changes

Vacant spaces bring new opportunities to change the city's landscape and land use, offering alternative ways of experiencing, testing and developing the city. Cities are growing, complex and interdependent systems that can comprise multiple shocks and stresses at any one time, requiring urban resilient solutions to strengthen the city's residents, communities, businesses, institutions and systems. By their very nature, meanwhile projects are diverse, adaptive and flexible and as such offer a multitude of resilient solutions and benefits in the short and long-term.

London has a long history of adapting to change and dealing with major challenges, however, the future is likely to bring increasingly less predictable risks due to the changing urban nature of the 21st Century. As outlined in London's Resilience Strategy, the city must prepare for long-term threats to its safety and stability by building resilience for people (London's communities and businesses) as well as resilience for place (the physical environment and key infrastructure).

By deploying meanwhile uses today that are linked to London's resilience agenda, as well as in accordance with many of London's Mayoral Strategies, we can start to develop ways of addressing some of the city's identified future challenges and building London's long-term resilience.

The incentives driving key players to initiate meanwhile uses on vacant spaces are already diverse and in many cases already responsive to these existing and future urban challenges, whereby we can begin to see the tangible value of meanwhile and its long-term positive benefits, including securing social value.

From shaping interim spaces for longer-term value (e.g. placemaking), to meeting a need the market is unable to provide (e.g. affordable workspaces) or addressing community, social and environmental gaps (e.g. food growing, education and green spaces). If mapped strategically onto identified shocks and stresses, meanwhile uses, therefore, can be applied as part of an incremental process in the identification of resilient solutions to many of London's pressing issues.

Inter-relationships between London's Resilience Strategy and potential Meanwhile Uses

Although meanwhile uses should not be viewed as a remedy in themselves, they can develop effective entry points; reinforcing the link between short-term meanwhile initiatives and long-term value.

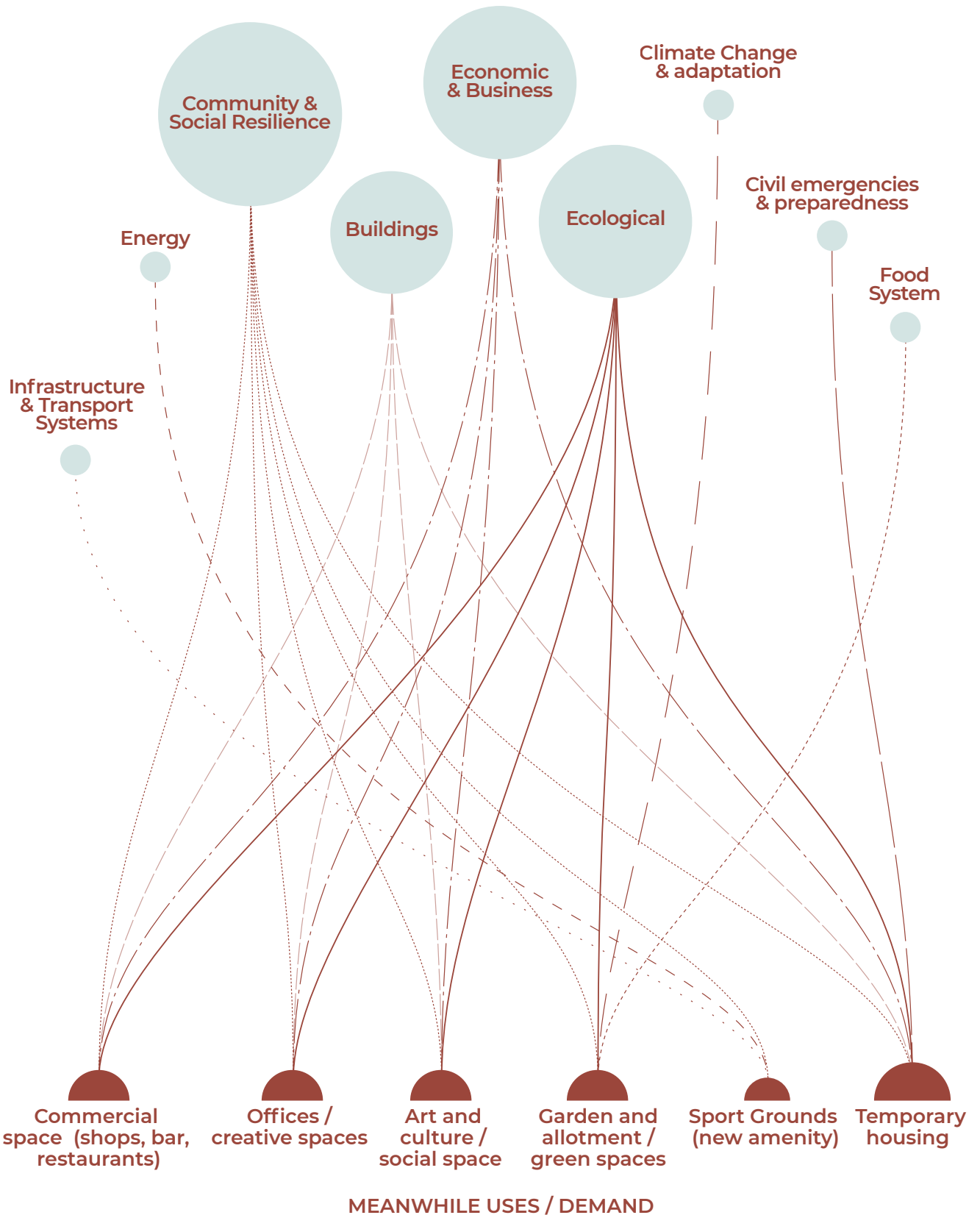
While the premise of meanwhile uses ignites ideas of short-term, temporary, limited interventions and therefore can be perceived as being of less value, even unsustainable, this report demonstrates that significant long-term benefits can be gained.

These temporary interventions can play a key role in igniting successful longer-term strategies to release social as well as economic and environmental value from vacant spaces. Meanwhile uses serve as an opportunity to drive, test and implement potential solutions to addressing some of London's core challenges and in the process help to build resilience for the city's people, places and processes.

LONDON'S IDENTIFIED SHOCKS & STRESSES	EXAMPLE OF MEANWHILE USES	LONG-TERM BENEFITS
Examples of Major Shocks		
Drought & flooding	Parklets, plazas and retrofitting of small open spaces using materials that are drought resistant and assist with stormwater	Supports placemaking and addresses city's adaptation to climate change impacts
Disease pandemic	Temporary accommodations in empty buildings or re-purposed buildings or temporary field hospitals in open spaces	Providing accommodation for homeless people, care workers etc., boosting capacity of healthcare facilities
Examples of Chronic Stresses		
Lack of social cohesion	Community infrastructure – provision of public spaces and services	Assists with urban renewal and placemaking, enhances local community interaction and active urban environments
Food insecurity and poor health and wellbeing	Community food growing (gardens/allotments/hydroponics), active streets and playgrounds and parks (shared spaces)	Sustainable food production, re-connect people with food (improved links to disadvantaged communities), educational and helps combat health issues
Poor housing affordability and quality	Modular construction – temporary housing to address immediate housing crisis	Delivers housing across multiple locations where it is required at any one time and provides a multi-purpose, sustainable structure

Meanwhile uses and London's areas of Resilience across Mayoral Strategies as identified in London's Preliminary Resilience Assessment

LONDON'S RESILIENCE AREAS ACROSS MAYORAL STRATEGIES





Meanwhile uses in the context of resilience planning - Covid 19

London, like all cities across the world, is currently going through the most significant crisis in a generation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact on the city has been substantial. There is already evidence that the impact on the city's businesses and its residents' livelihoods will inevitably have a far greater impact on the economy, transport, environment and overall resilience in the longer-term.

The lockdown implemented by the UK Government to limit social interaction required temporarily closing much of the economy and restricting people's movements which had an immediate effect on the way in which the city and its town centres operated and how its citizens interacted.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of meanwhile uses across London has multiplied significantly as residents, businesses and local authorities together try to adapt and mobilise to respond to their needs in the wake of an urban crisis. The ability of meanwhile uses to fill vacant spaces and re-purpose existing spaces has been critical to maintaining as much 'normality' across the city as possible. They have delivered rapid practical and adaptive responses, reflecting changed priorities regarding urban infrastructure and social demands. Meanwhile uses were evident in the preparation for how we were going to tackle the crisis (such as the Nightingale Hospital in London) as well as in our current and emerging responses; from reinventing uses such as turning hotels into temporary housing, to retrofitting our public spaces so they support social activity in these testing times (such as new cycle paths and widening pedestrian pavements) as well as repurposing shop fronts to facilitate ongoing business and ensure the city continues to operate within a safe environment.

Meanwhile uses will have a very prominent and important role to play as the pandemic enters its recovery phase and we begin to look to the future. The ability to test and trial uses and spaces within a rapidly changing Covid-19 context allows greater agility through a triage response and enables us to visualise, understand, engage and develop the city differently, trialling alternative solutions so that we can be sure their delivery successfully responds to need and builds resilience. For example, building inclusive communities, enhancing social capital through local skills development and training and greening the city by improving environmental outputs to advance health and wellbeing.

Together, the opportunities that exist through activating meanwhile uses can support the achievement of the Mayor's Good Growth principles by enhancing civic pride, driving economic growth and delivering more inclusive and sustainable development. The monitoring and evaluation of meanwhile uses against such agreed outcomes and KPIs will be key

to being able to evaluate success and provide the evidence base for translation from meanwhile to successful long-term interventions.

Covid-19 has negatively impacted some areas of our city more than others in terms of how we live and work in the city and the spaces we occupy. The recovery phase offers an opportunity to use meanwhile uses to re-evaluate how we use these spaces and what lessons can be learnt to maximise value in the future.

- **Renewing high streets** – Many of London’s high streets were declining before Covid-19, however, the pandemic in some cases has accelerated this change and the vacancy rate will undoubtedly increase over this time. Nevertheless, where more flexible uses have been employed and there has been a shift in approach to nurture the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of local neighbourhoods, some town centres have begun to flourish. Where high streets have been able to provide temporary retail and workspaces, they have maintained activity and continued support local business. In the longer term, this could help to attract new visitors, support existing businesses and return units to the commercial market, supporting a renewal effect.
- **A different way of working** – The pandemic has shown that remote working can be successful and, in many instances, has changed perceptions on where and how we work. It is reasonable to assume that future work locations will be defined by where people live rather than where their employer is based, and thereby create a new demand for local, flexible workspaces. This change will have a transformational impact on the way cities operate, impacting office space, transport, local services, and housing. Just as new approaches to retail and the high street may change how we use our local neighbourhoods, greater remote working will also place a new emphasis on our neighbourhood areas. Meanwhile uses offer the opportunity to trial vacant properties for alternative uses, Vacant retail units could become a new form of community co-working space or serve as other neighbourhood support functions.
- **A new way of living** - Like offices, the pandemic has highlighted London’s (and the UK’s) housing crisis and has shown that our existing housing stock is not always affordable nor of high quality standard. Lockdown has been especially difficult for the homeless, private renters who have lost income and those households living in overcrowded homes without outdoor space as well as those that have had to work remotely with inadequate space or access to technology. This will have an impact on the property industry and regulations whereby the demand and need for affordable housing and flexible living, working and social space will be greater than ever. Meanwhile uses could be used to support new approaches to ways of living, for example to support new models for co-operative housing, and innovative co-housing developments. This could also work in tandem with the renewal of high streets as we transform how we live and work and our relationship with the local neighbourhood; fulfilling the GLA’s High Streets for All vision.

- **Valuing public space and active travel** – Another key insight this pandemic has unearthed is the high value given to London’s parks and open spaces. For months they have been the only recreational spaces available to many of us and have been indispensable for those living in the city without access to a private garden. The absence of cars and activity from our streets has also allowed us to visualise a future that prioritises people and the environment and the importance of sustainable travel modes in the city. This next phase of recovery offers the chance to re-evaluate our modes of travel as well as availability of public space. Meanwhile uses provide the opportunity to trial new ways to support the Mayor in improving active travel modes, boosting the trading environment for businesses and civic spaces for residents as well as addressing the air quality public health crisis in London. Clean, green and sustainable travel is to be at the heart of London’s recovery.

London’s Recovery Programme - The Mayor of London is working with London Councils to develop an economic and social Recovery Programme to help London recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme has a clear objective/grand challenge: **to restore confidence in the city, minimise the impact on communities and build back better the city’s economy and society.**

The grand challenge will be addressed through 9 cross-cutting ‘missions’. These missions were designed to be bold yet specific, ambitious yet realistic, so they can gather wide support for delivery and foster collaboration across sectors and stakeholders. They collectively set out London’s opportunities and priorities for recovery, from supporting digital transition and the green economy, to enabling good work and resilient communities, and strengthening the health of Londoners.

Meanwhile use activities can play an important part in helping deliver the missions, testing innovative solutions and creating opportunities to mobilise local organisations and stakeholders relatively quickly. One mission in particular – ‘High Streets for All’ – could significantly benefit from MWU activity at the local level. This mission aims to improve public spaces and deliver new exciting new activities in London’s underused high street buildings, working with diverse communities.

POLICY REVIEW

The growth of meanwhile uses across London, from independent projects to integrated meanwhile use strategies makes it increasingly important in planning and decision-making processes for both public and private actors.

National Strategic Policy Framework

Reflective of the recent trends and uptake of meanwhile uses as we define them here, meanwhile uses have only emerged in UK policy terms over the last ten years, following central government's first publication. In 2009, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published the 'Meanwhile Project' which was a support service for groups seeking to turn economic crisis into opportunity and transform vacant shops and light industrial units into vibrant community uses. This was at a time when the opportunities of meanwhile use in terms of social benefits and local well-being were referenced largely in the context of reviving town centres following the 2008 financial crash. Consistent with this view, meanwhile use was again referenced as a temporary solution in DCLG's 2009 publication of 'Looking after our town centres' and latterly in the Portas Review published in 2011.

Ever since, a call for greater guidance on meanwhile use provision has resulted in the UK Government publishing further reports that begin to recognise a value of meanwhile use, albeit primarily economic in practice rather than social or environmental. This has primarily been in relation to the revitalisation of town centres. Most recently, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) has initiated an 'Open Doors' project in partnership with the Meanwhile Foundation. This seeks to promote meanwhile uses as a mechanism for high street revitalisation by matching landlords to meanwhile tenants.

The Planning Framework

In planning terms, however, planning policy and guidance remains bereft of a well-defined meanwhile use policy approach. Although changes in recent years have resulted in a planning system that is increasingly aware of the benefits of meanwhile use, minimal changes have occurred to facilitate the implementation of meanwhile uses and recognise them as a valid planning and development tool.

MEANWHILE USE IN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO) outlines that any use with a duration over 28 days (consecutive or within one year) requires planning permission. In planning terms, therefore, unless a scheme is proposed to operate for less than 28 days, or it qualifies for temporary change of use under permitted development (PD) rights, a full detailed planning application must be submitted for any meanwhile use. This will be subject to the same determination period (8-weeks), consultation, supporting material requirements and planning assessment as a permanent use.

The main issues for consideration in relation to a proposed meanwhile use development may include, but are not be limited to:

- Principle of Development
- Urban Design
- Amenity
- Transport
- Refuse
- Inclusive Design

Even if a meanwhile use qualifies for permitted development, there are some use classes that are still subject to a prior approval procedure with the local planning authority. This seeks approval of various matters, dependent on the nature of the use, but might typically include matters relating to parking and highways, flooding, and contaminated land.

The Government's recent response to consultation on planning reform has extended permitted development rights and temporary change of use to provide greater flexibility within the planning framework for the provision of meanwhile uses without requiring planning permission and to support speed up of delivery. Regulations came into force on 25th May 2019 , and support more temporary flexible uses within the Use Class Order. Part 2 of the Amendment Regulations amend the existing GPDO right to additionally allow the temporary change of use to specified community uses: exhibition hall, public library, museum, clinic or health centre, or art gallery, and to extend the period of temporary uses from two to three years.

The current planning process, therefore, does allow some flexible approaches to meanwhile use delivery, while still allowing the local consideration of key planning matters. However, it is acknowledged that the process can be complex, particularly for certain actors and community groups with limited knowledge of the system and greater guidance on the application process for meanwhile uses would be welcomed.

MEANWHILE USE IN PLANNING POLICY

At the time of writing, there is no formally recognised approach to meanwhile use within planning policy and guidance. It remains intermittent and at the discretion of local authorities, with no single identified meanwhile use approach.

The National Planning Policy Framework

At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) makes no reference to the application of meanwhile use. The NPPF makes reference to sustainable development and the social aspects of this, but this is articulated in terms of plan-making and the outputs of long-term development. Additionally, where there is reference to inclusivity and placemaking, the word ‘meanwhile’ does not appear in the NPPF, nor does ‘temporary’ in the context in which we are writing.

THE LONDON PLAN

At a regional level, the draft London Plan (July 2019) refers to meanwhile uses across various policy areas, with the primary focus on the delivery of meanwhile uses for housing (Policy H4). Boroughs are encouraged to identify vacant sites in both public and private ownership that is suitable for residential occupation in the short term.

In addition, draft London Plan policy supports flexibility for meanwhile uses across the following policy areas:

- Use of vacant properties in the context of town centres (Policy SD7 – Town Centres: development principles and Development Plan Documents)
- Opportunities for meanwhile uses in early phases of development to create temporary public realm (Policy D7 – Public realm)
- Use of vacant properties and land for meanwhile uses for cultural and creative activities in the context of promoting viability and diversity of town centres (Policy HC5 – Supporting London’s culture and creative industries)
- Opportunities for the provision of meanwhile space for community gardening, including food growing, within new developments (Policy G8 – Food growing).

Although the draft London Plan does seek to encourage London Boroughs to identify opportunities for meanwhile use, there is opportunity to further encourage meanwhile use in the context of other policy areas and provide further guidance on the Mayor’s approach, highlighting the wider benefits in terms of meeting London’s resilience agenda.



Local Plans

At a local authority level, meanwhile use within planning policy is inconsistent.

In London there are 35 local planning authorities, comprising the 32 London Boroughs, the City of London, and the two Mayoral Development Corporations (the London Legacy Development Corporation, and the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation).

At present, only 22 of the 35 local planning authorities make some reference to meanwhile or temporary uses within their Local Plans, with some providing greater mechanisms and more encouragement for its use than others. Only

A Local Plan Review of meanwhile and temporary use policies across the London planning authorities can be found in Appendix B.

Through streamlining the policy approach to meanwhile uses, the GLA and local authorities can provide support and further encourage the application of meanwhile uses on vacant land for the productive benefit of both private and public sectors. A more coordinated and established approach for the London community would further assist in delivering wider economic benefits but also strengthen the capital's social and environmental resilience.

MEANWHILE USE AS A BUSINESS MODEL

It is evidenced that meanwhile uses generate economic value for cities by enabling unused or vacant land and property around the city to be made productive again. In addition, they can generate social and environmental value by making efficient use of city land, supporting entrepreneurship, creating places of social and economic inclusion, and providing the opportunity to test and experiment new uses.

Meanwhile uses generate value (financial returns as well as economic, social and environmental value) over two key periods: operation and capitalisation—and the former is often influenced by the latter.

Long-term

Capitalisation is the idea that the meanwhile use generates placemaking value for an area, either by improving the image or demonstrating viability for a long-term use. The additional attractiveness of the place is then capitalised into the final development values (when the property is sold or leased), after the meanwhile use. Accordingly, landowners and developers will aim to attract meanwhile uses which deliver greater capitalisation value. This should be considered alongside a sustainable exit strategy to ensure that there is no disconnect between short-term use and long-term benefit for the wider community.

Short-term

The operation of the meanwhile use must also be affordable or revenue-generating to cover the costs of setting up and operating the use. The extent to which a meanwhile use is expected to add to the capitalised value may influence the degree to which the operational phase must be profit-earning (as a short-term loss at operational stage can be offset by a larger return in capitalised values at development stage).

Meanwhile uses often create economic and social value beyond the site—into the communities. For example, activating spaces with greater footfall and more community use can reduce crime or squatting and make a neighbourhood and its environment more appealing. Accordingly, the transitional urbanism created by a meanwhile use has the potential to improve the quality of life of local communities. Those wider benefits can justify the investment by public authorities such as the GLA or local boroughs, as well as by private parties, which would see their return on investment through those wider impacts.

Additionally, there is the opportunity to test and inform future uses within more permanent forms of development. Examples exist around London where private developers have funded meanwhile operators on their large sites through different development phases to test viability, such as at King's Cross. The successes and failures of the meanwhile operations have fed back into longer-term development to inform and refine its design. This informative factor, along with the capacity of meanwhile urbanism to enhance the quality of its surroundings are wider benefits that private developers will perceive through more successful schemes and potentially higher real estate values.

The requirement for capitalised values in relation to operational financial returns will be dependent on the specific project and developer.

MEANWHILE USE A CORE ENABLER OF GOOD GROWTH

Good Growth in London is about delivering growth in the context of economic, social and environmental outcomes. Meanwhile uses fundamentally align with GLA's principles of Good Growth by making the best use of land, delivering social outcomes such as neighbourliness and community support, and fostering growth of start-up and scale-up businesses.

The draft New London Plan makes the case for Good Growth which is defined as “growth that is socially and economically inclusive and environmentally sustainable” *GLA, Draft London Plan (2018)*.

It sets out six core policies that should inform London's development: (1) building strong and inclusive communities, (2) making the best use of land, (3) creating a healthy city, (4) delivering homes, (5) growing a good economy, and (6) increasing efficiency and resilience. This is further supported at a national level by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that seeks to achieve sustainable development and meet interdependent economic, social and environmental objectives.

A meanwhile use strategy can enable Good Growth in London by incorporating them into planning, environmental and economic develop strategy and the borough and GLA levels. The table below highlights how key characteristics of meanwhile use align with the Mayor's vision of Good Growth. The case studies provided in this report further exemplify how meanwhile uses can efficiently foster Good Growth.

**GOOD GROWTH
PRINCIPLES****MEANWHILE USE ENABLING CHARACTERISTICS**

**Promoting
inclusiveness**

- The use of underused assets across the city can generate accessible business opportunities within communities and unlock innovative and more affordable business models (e.g. affordable or emergency housing projects, economic inclusion opportunities through free or affordable office space, etc.).
- Meanwhile uses encourage developers and local authorities to assess the needs of specific communities or neighbourhoods prior to development. Meanwhile uses can be used as powerful tools for consultation and participative design of permanent development, finding common ground between existing and future residents and users.

**Best use
of land**

- Meanwhile uses enhance productive use of city land which would otherwise not be used at all, or which would stay idle for various reasons (e.g. in-between developments, administrative or legal challenges, etc.). Some longer-term meanwhile uses create jobs as well. For example, a meanwhile use (10 years) at Imperial College White City is creating up to 25,000 sqm of incubator space.
- Inasmuch as meanwhile uses can drive demand and footfall prior to development, they can reduce the risk of construction delays and the blight of empty spaces by creating and demonstrating demand for uses.

**Healthy
city**

- Diverse meanwhile uses, including green spaces, allotments to grow organic food, and even temporary health centres, can be developed across the city can make streets and neighbourhoods healthier and contribute to Londoners' wellbeing.

**Delivering
homes**

- Meanwhile uses can be used as tools to test and inform the right mix of uses in the design of new development. They also offer the opportunity to progressively activate a new place or development and ensure a gradual integration within the existing development and surrounding communities.
- Successful meanwhile uses can enhance the perception of areas and make them more attractive to developers, business owners, and existing and potential residents. Accordingly, meanwhile uses can support development viability.

**Efficient and
resilient**

- Meanwhile uses offer opportunities to address some of the most aspirational and complex goals of cities, as they allow testing and trialling of new ideas and space to create diverse, resilient and sustainable cities, communities and economies.
 - The unlocking and operating of meanwhile uses often requires close collaboration between the public and private sectors, offering unique opportunities to jointly come up with more sustainable development opportunities.
 - The business models enabled by meanwhile uses can contribute to the social value of the city as well as being financially sustainable for small and independent businesses, thus enhance the economic and social resilience of the city.
-



03

Stakeholder Consultation

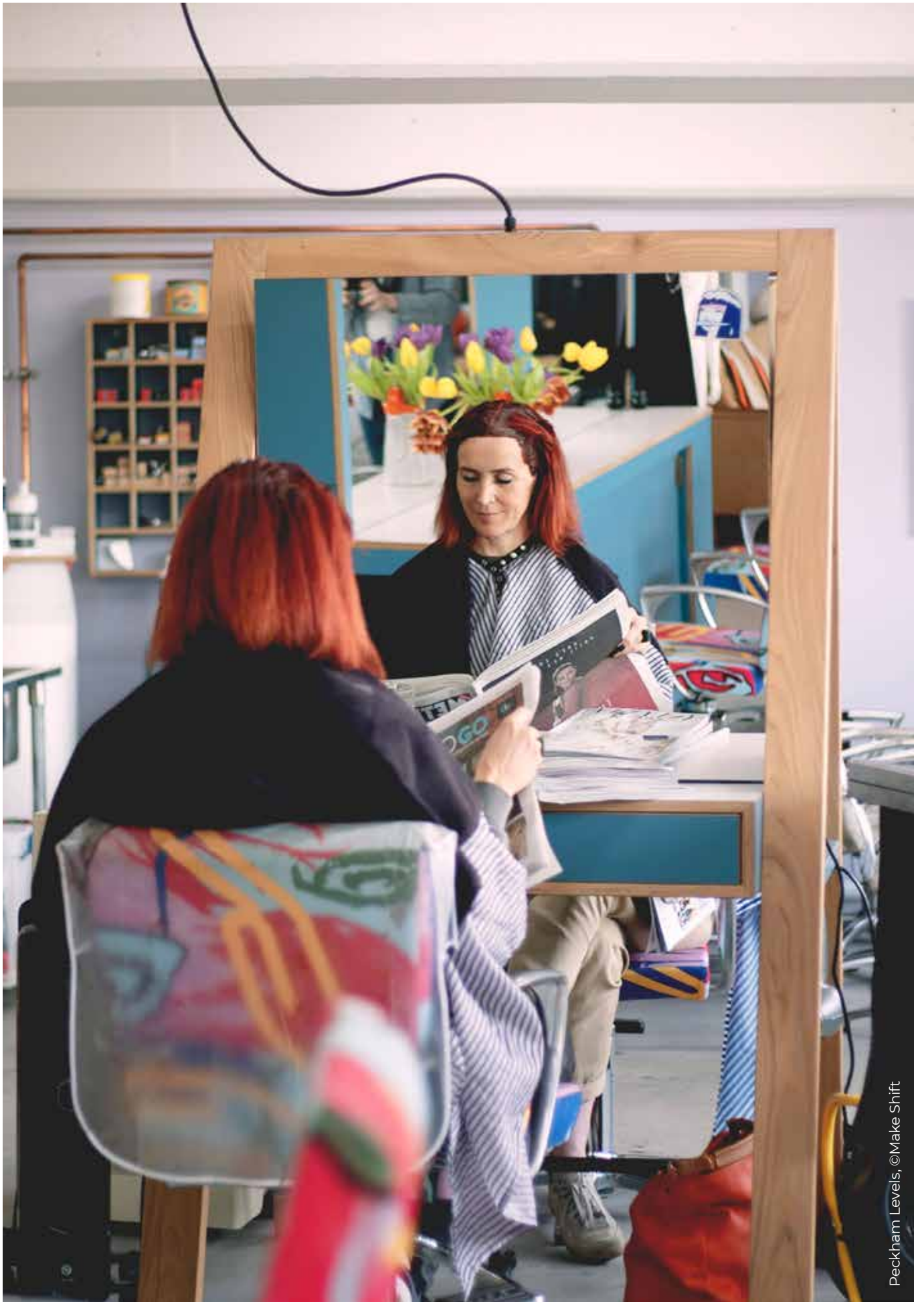
OVERVIEW

The report applies a qualitative approach to gathering the appropriate information from meanwhile uses and users across London. The project team engaged widely with a range of stakeholders through a selection of case studies, interviews and events. The report draws on a variety of meanwhile uses and explores the current challenges and future opportunities of meanwhile use in London. Key findings are discussed within the analysis section and identified challenges and future opportunities for meanwhile uses are outlined under key themes. Interviews were carried out prior to Covid-19, however the analysis does provide a brief follow-up review.

Interviews

One to one interviews were held with the following stakeholders within the GLA and identified several key outcomes.

Name of stakeholder	Position/role	Organisation	Key points
Elliot Kemp	Policy Team Leader, Design, Heritage and Housing	GLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for meanwhile to deliver prefab housing that can rotate from site to site• Mapping vacant spaces could be an opportunity
Peter Massini and Ben Connor	Lead Green Infrastructure team and Senior Policy and Programmer Officer	GLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledged that there is a lack of guidance• Lack of transparent information regarding land ownership is a challenge• BIDs play an important role in engaging with local authorities• Highlights that communication throughout the process is very important opportunity
Melissa Meyer, Farah Elahi, Sasha Salmon	Senior Project and Policy Officer, Social Integration and the Built Environment; Community Engagement Manager; Senior Adviser to Deputy Mayor for Social Integration	GLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Importance of considering both the community and the civil society needs• Importance of a long-term strategy to build on the social benefits from the meanwhile use• Emphasised the opportunity of meanwhile use to address needs from civil society• Capacity building as a key element to consider



Peckham Levels, ©Make Shift

Events

LONDON FIRST EVENT

Arup attended an event organised by London First, in October 2019, on the role of meanwhile use in transforming high streets and town centres. The aim of the workshop was to bring together London First members, Planning Officers Society London members and stakeholders to consider the challenges posed to local authorities and to operators when promoting meanwhile use as a way of transforming high streets and town centres. The event was attended by 20 participants and included representatives from the London Borough of Camden, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London Borough of Waltham Forest, London Borough of Brent, Street Feast, UK Active, London Union and others. Discussions themes include the role meanwhile can play in creative placemaking, the challenges (planning and other) in delivering meanwhile, new uses to target and grow, licensing, the role of BIDS and town centre management groups, and lastly, what can be done to facilitate meanwhile use.

Some of the challenges discussed included; finding the land/property owners, cost of making good after dismantling, submission of a full planning application (similar to a permanent development), timeframe of planning application and planning decision, and use class.

Opportunities highlighted included; local authorities to keep a register of vacant properties and underutilised land with list of owners, vacancy management strategies that also commits landowners to dress the property when vacant, update the use classes, and pushing for a government planning practice guidance (PPG) on meanwhile use.

ARUP BREAKFAST EVENT

As part of the stakeholder consultation, in October 2019 Arup hosted a breakfast workshop with over 20 participants. These were representatives and key stakeholders involved in the meanwhile debate and practice in London. It gathered both public and private actors, involved at various stages of the process of establishing a meanwhile project. The key objective: to share and discuss the challenges and opportunities for meanwhile space activation as well as the interim findings of the project. Round-table discussions were held and focused on outlining each stakeholder's experience through these themes of planning, funding and people.

In terms of planning, the questions focused on how planning can support or hinder meanwhile uses and if existing planning policy provides sufficient detail, guidance and support for delivery. Regarding funding, questions focused on the barriers to initial and operating financing schemes, financial sustainability, the particularity of meanwhile business models and the various ways of capturing value. With regard to people, questions focused on how meanwhile could further support local and vulnerable communities and if there is a legacy of meanwhile uses that can be harnessed and sustained.

The outcomes of the workshop have been incorporated within our analysis and have also informed the future recommendations for the GLA.

Name	Surname	Organisation
Adriana	Marques	Peabody
Alice	Reeves	GLA
Ben	Conor	GLA
Charlie	Peel	Urban Good
Daniel	Raven - Ellison	National Park City
Giorgia	Franco	Berkeley Group
Jack	Skillen	Team London Bridge
James	Leay	Make Shift
Alex	Lauschke	Meanwhile Space CIC
Jo	Carfield	Centre for London
Jose	Reis	GLA
Katie	Rice	London Borough of Brent
Lisa	Jones	Produce UK
Lydia	Clarkson	Shaftesbury
Manijeh	Verghese	unscene architecture
Melissa	Meyer	GLA
Rebecca	Smith	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Zoe	Sellers	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Sara	Hitchcock	London Borough of Croydon
Selina	Mason	Lendlease
Will	Rimmell	Labsgroup
Katy	Renwick	Urban Growth

CASE STUDIES

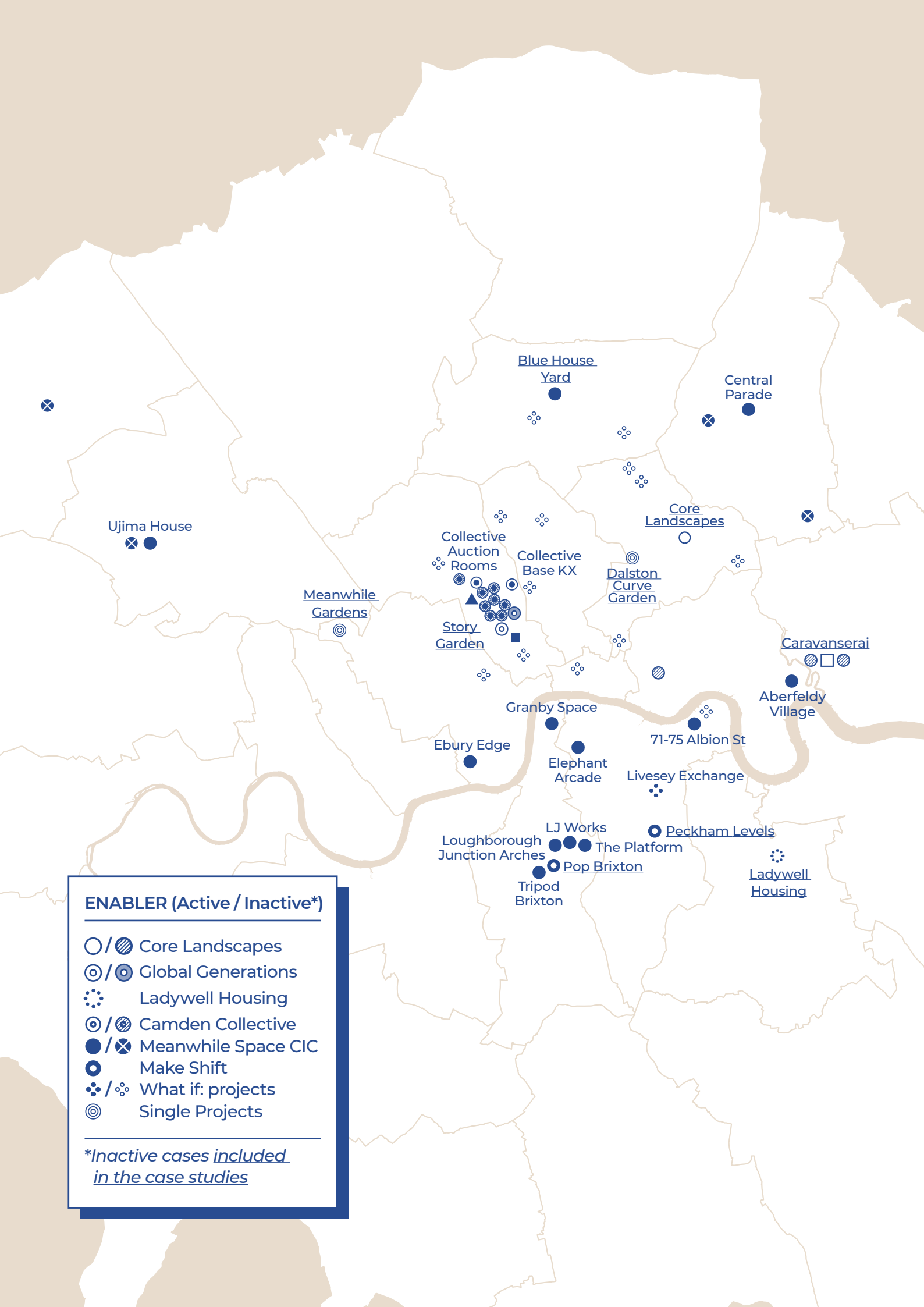
CASE STUDY SELECTION

A long list of case studies was established and a comprehensive assessment of uses, drivers, business models, challenges and key success factors undertaken. Following review, a shortlist of ten case studies were selected for interview.

The shortlist case studies illustrate as fully as possible the existing diversity of meanwhile uses across London, including the various needs and motivations relevant to the numerous stakeholders involved, and demonstrate the degrees of impact that meanwhile use development can provide.

The use of case studies enables us to draw on lessons from on the ground practice, providing direct access to the instrumental actors and organisations involved in meanwhile use, and is an approach that is particularly suited to research that requires a detailed understanding of organisational or social processes because of the rich contextual data.

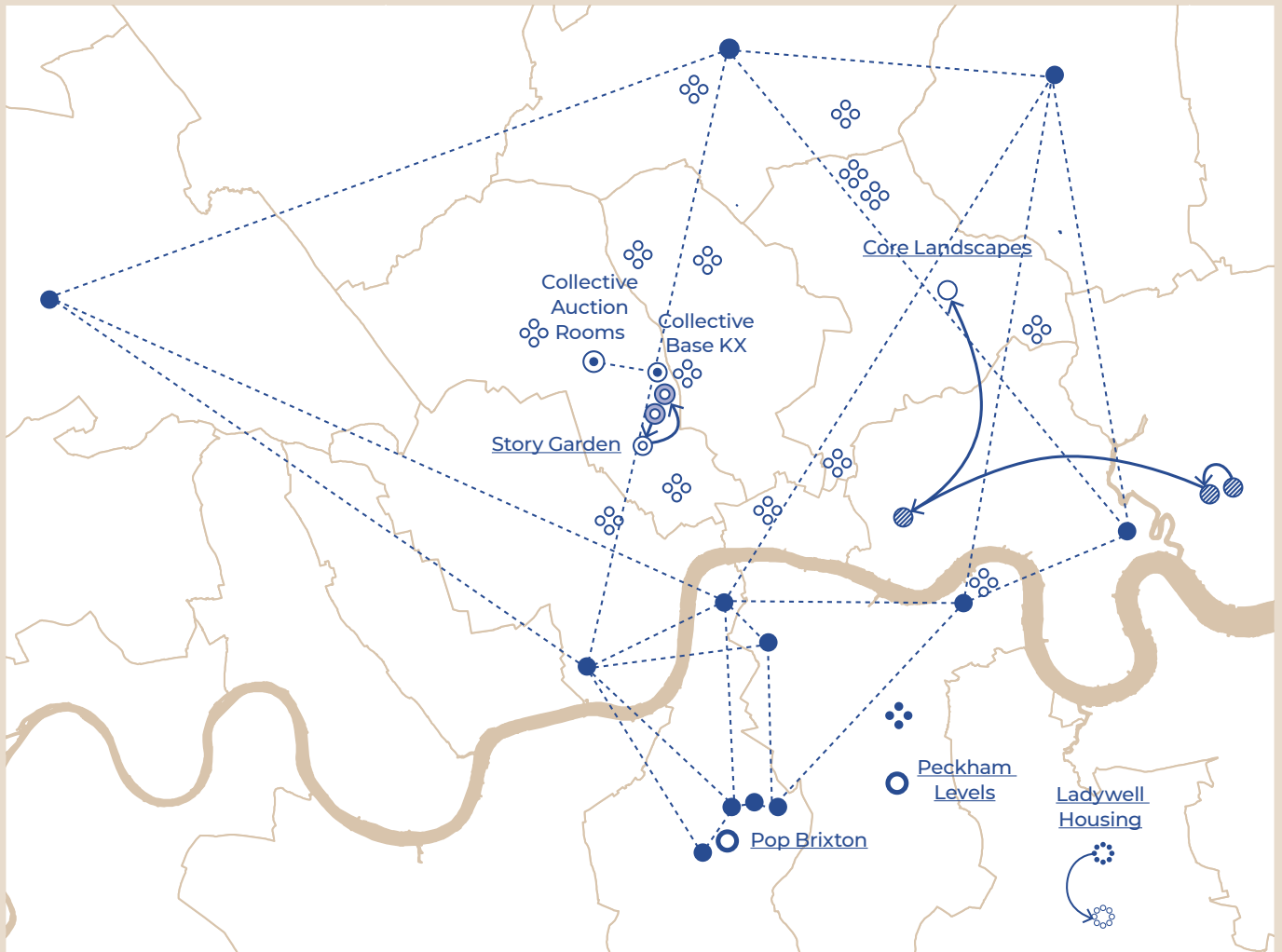
The case studies draw out a number of key points around how meanwhile use is considered within planning, and policy and governance more broadly, as well as actors, funding and other processes can impact the success of meanwhile uses. The ten case studies focus on the perspectives and experiences of the following organisations. Further information can be found in the case study proformas.



ENABLER (Active / Inactive*)

- /◐ Core Landscapes
- ◎/◑ Global Generations
- ⋄ Ladywell Housing
- ◎/◐ Camden Collective
- /⊗ Meanwhile Space CIC
- ◉ Make Shift
- ⋄/◐ What if: projects
- ◎ Single Projects

**Inactive cases included in the case studies*



ENABLER

- /◐ Core Landscapes
- ⊙/⊚ Global Generations
- ⋄ Ladywell Housing
- ⊙/◐ Camden Collective
- /⊗ Meanwhile Space CIC
- ⊙ Make Shift
- ⋄/⊚ What if: projects

NETWORK

- - Meanwhile use network
- ← Meanwhile use rotation

This map illustrates, in the context of the enablers and case studies analysed in this report, different long-term operation scenarios. For example;

- Camden Collective operates a network of meanwhile spaces concurrently within the same Borough.
- Meanwhile Space CIC operates a network of spaces in the wider context of London.
- Core Landscapes rotates the meanwhile use to a different plot once the lease expires.
- Skip Garden has recently rotated to a new site (Story Garden) and will become permanent in King's Cross development in the future.
- Ladywell will similarly rotate to a new location within Lewisham in the coming years.
- Vacant Lots operated a series of meanwhile spaces with similar use in different plots across London at the same time, with similar activation and de-activation timeframe.

Case Study Interviews

Organisation	Key points
Make Shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Importance of engagement with the community since the early stages of the process• Challenge to get funding without long lease or security of assets• Challenge to build a sustainable business model in a short lease. Ideally you would need 5-10 years
Meanwhile Space CIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making ownership more transparent is key• Engagement with local community is important• Requires long term leases to sustain and being able to raise capital. The length of the lease determines what they are able to do and achieve• Outlines the opportunity of using S106 to secure affordable working space in new developments
Core Landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate leasing periods are important to build social outputs and meet their objectives as charity. Ideally it should be no less than 3 years
Camden Collective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting the right spaces as a challenge• Key for them to have the BID's support• Long term and well established relation with the Council was key to make it happen• Need to put some pressure in landlords to let their spaces for meanwhile
What if : projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• States that working with local authorities can be difficult and GLA is instrumental in making these projects take place• Trust relationship with local authorities is essential• Value of meanwhile use is the opportunity to experiment, test and fail• Heavy reliance on grants
Global Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key to build and retain relationships with community and local authorities• Capacity of resource and pressure to deliver identified as challenges

Blue House Yard

Summary

Location

Vacant council office building and adjacent car park, London N22.

Status

Construction works started in January 2017, opening July 2017.

Objective

To provide suitable, affordable workspaces for small businesses, which are an important aspect of the local economy, as well as offering social space.

Target audience

Local businesses and residents.

Project overview

The temporary re-development of an underutilised space for creative work, retail, community and public space.

Space typology






Open space and a former office building.

Use

Retail Units, studio and office space, event space and a café.



Key Actors

 Space provider	Haringey Council. The Council provided the disused car park in the town centre to support the wider regeneration of the borough.
 Funder	Jan Kattein Architects and social enterprise Meanwhile Space CIC (together, High Street Works). Additionally, the project was financially supported by the GLA.
 Enabler	Haringey Council and High Street Works.
 Facilitator	High Street Works.
 Decision Maker	Haringey Council.

Findings

Funding sources

Rent earned from letting out space. All spaces are let on a fair rent policy, with prices set between 50-80% of market value, on flexible terms and with no upfront deposits.

Meanwhile Space CIC also draws on grant programmes to assist with growth.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

Temporary planning permission was secured in December 2016 for a period of up to 5 years.

Communication strategy

Meanwhile Space CIC adopted an open communication strategy which sought to build up trust with local community groups and businesses.

Operation management

Meanwhile Space CIC is a social enterprise – a company Ltd by shares (this reduces risk in terms of borrowing). It is self-sufficient and holds all liabilities and responsibility for income. 90% of income is generated from rent of affordable workspaces.

Long-term strategy

Once the temporary planning permission lapses, the site will be redeveloped by Haringey Council. However, Meanwhile Space CIC is a sustainable enterprise that seeks to ensure positive social outputs.

Problems encountered

- Minimal problems experienced in the creation and operation of the project.
- Determining the legacy of the project may prove to be the biggest challenge.
- At times, grant requirements of monitoring of number of jobs created etc. can be challenging. Targets can be set quite high.

Positive outcomes

- The project responds to local need – fuelling Haringey's creative industries, catalysing wider socio-economic outputs.
- Employed local apprentices and carpenters in its construction.
- Designed to be a stepping stone, assisting local businesses to grow and become self-sufficient, also providing space and condition for them to test their ideas, while reducing risks.

Takeaways

- Evidences the generative potential of local authorities providing their own disused land to meanwhile projects.
- A solid relationship between Haringey Council and High Street Works underpins the success of the project.
- Design is important – the design intervention at Blue House Yard has had a wider catalytic impact, having an open site for the community to access is also very important.

Further information & sources: bluehouseyard.com/

Peckham Levels

Summary

Location

Former multi-storey car park, London SE15.

Status

Active. The project was given permission in 2015, opening its doors for the first time in 2017.

Objective

To transform an underused multi-storey car park into a cultural destination and provide affordable workspace for local creatives.

Target audience

Local creative individuals and businesses, as well as young Londoners.

Project overview

7 levels of an underutilised car park transformed into a cultural and creative hub.






Space typology

5 levels of closed workspace with 2 levels of public space.

Use

Mix of commercial, social enterprise, studio space, public space, retail units and a range of food and drink outlets.

Key Actors

 Space provider	Make Shift - Southwark Council owns the land and provides a headlease to Make Shift which leases it to individual enterprises.
 Funder	Privately funded by Make Shift. Southwark council provides the land for peppercorn rent and 25% net profit share.
 Enabler	Make Shift (the operating company) and Southwark Council (which maintains influence in the site's running). Carl Turner Architects did the design.
 Facilitator	Southwark Council (launched a competition for innovative repurposing of the disused car park).
 Decision Maker	Southwark Council.

Findings

Funding sources

Ongoing rent from leasing out spaces.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

Designated as part of the wider Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan. In 2015 permission was granted for 3 years to temporarily use levels 7-10 of the car park as sui-generis mixed use. In 2016 permission was granted to transform levels -1 to 6 into mixed-uses including workspaces, event spaces and restaurant uses until 2021. In 2017 Southwark Council extended the lease from five years to eight years, with the intention to extend to 20 years. Lease and planning extended to 2039 in 2019.

Communication strategy

Make Shift enacted a strong commitment to community engagement from the outset with this project. Consultation events were run in various locations around the borough. A number of groups were set up early – including a steering group, a local business representative, a local community group, a local arts organisation representative – to guide the project and ensure community relevance.

Operation management

Make Shift.

Long-term strategy

To be confirmed over longer-term. For the time being, the success of the project has led to the car-park site being taken off the Council's list for development.

Problems encountered

Traders reported difficulties associated with using a site that used to be a car park – for example, poor ventilation creates a challenging working environment for food traders.

Positive outcomes

Despite some accusations of gentrification, Peckham Levels supports the local area through: providing space for 130+ independent enterprises, of which 70% + are southwark residents, 300+ full and part-time jobs, providing 20% studios at 35% of market value, 25% event spaces free for local community groups, 10% of profits are retained in a community investment fund and 1% of revenue is donated to the Make Shift Foundation, delivering access to enterprise and employment programmes for 16-25 year old. There are lessons to be learned for community benefits of meanwhile uses.

Takeaways

Broad community engagement was fundamental to the success of the project. Ways of communicating with the community included running events at schools, local festivals and knocking on doors. Make Shift describe this as making the effort to go out into the community, rather than simply inviting the community in.

Further information & sources: peckhamlevels.org/

Caravanserai

Summary

Location

A vacant site opposite Canning Town tube station, London E16.

Status

Inactive (active between 2011 and 2015).

Objective

To create a temporary and low-budget community hub which would generate lasting opportunities for the local community through a range of enterprise opportunities and participatory events.

Target audience

The public.

Project overview

A new public square enclosed by units used by local community groups, artists and traders. It was built with young people through apprenticeships and activities included performances, art installations, gardening, workshops and skills-exchange.

Space typology

5 levels of closed workspace with 2 levels of public space.



Use

Public space, mixed-use.

ING TOWN
ANSERAI *

THE WALKING LOVE JOURNAL

Key Actors

 Space provider	Newham Council. As the land owner, the Council provided the land free of charge after holding a competition to stimulate wider cultural and economic regeneration of the Royal Docks.
 Funder	Ash Sakula Architects, together with a range of grants from sources including: the National Lottery, London Community Foundation, Neighbourhood Investment Fund, and Newham Go For It Grants.
 Enabler	Ash Sakula Architects (winner of Mayor of London and Newham competition to utilise the space).
 Facilitator	Newham Council (competition holder for the vacant space).
 Decision Maker	Newham Council.

Findings

Funding sources

Mix of grants, capital and volunteer funding. The project was not profit earning, although on-site traders could earn money.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

The project had a temporary lease for five years before being handed over to the developer leading Canning Town's Town Centre redevelopment, Bouygues.

Communication strategy

Efforts were made to involve the local community from the outset, including inviting locals to submit ideas, create and run on-site kiosks and activities.

Operation management

Canning Town Caravanserai LTD.

Long-term strategy

Limited. The project is being replaced by Canning Town's Town Centre Redevelopment.

Problems encountered

When formulating the project, the assumption was that large numbers of people would be passing through the area during the 2012 Olympics, due to the site's strategic location. However, this footfall did not materialise because of Transport for London's decision not to allow visitors to alight at Canning Town Station during the games. Another factor contributing to the lack of footfall was the uninviting environment; hoarding surrounding the site could have lowered feelings of safety, as well as prohibiting passers-by from seeing activity behind the fencing.

Positive outcomes

The temporary transformation of a disused physical space for community cohesion and urban experimentation.

Takeaways

- Winner of 'Meanwhile London: Opportunity Docks' competition launched by Property Week, the former London Development Agency, the Mayor of London and the Mayor of Newham for strategic redevelopment.
- No tangible legacy.

Further information & sources:

caravanserai.org.uk/
interimeast.org/reports/PrecedentsAtlasWEBfinal.pdf

Core Landscapes



Summary

Location

Currently a hub roof garden at the Core Arts building in E9 (previously in E1 and E16).

Status

Active (began as a movable garden in 2009).

Objective

A mental health charity, Core Landscapes transforms vacant land in deprived urban areas into hubs for community engagement through horticulture, design, workshops, training and events – improving physical health, mental health, wellbeing and community cohesion.

Target audience

Mental health patients and local communities.

Project overview

Core Landscapes utilises vacant sites to create green spaces for community wellbeing. The 'mobile gardens' principally help people referred by health care practitioners and is also open to the public.






Space typology

Vacant lots, currently on rooftop of Core Arts building.

Use

Garden space, community space.

Key Actors

 Space provider	Site dependent. To date local authorities, hospital trusts or Core Arts.
 Funder	Multiple grants, including GLA funding streams, and clinical referral route funding, also self-generating through corporate funding.
 Enabler	Core Arts not-for-profit social business.
 Facilitator	Core Arts.
 Decision Maker	Site dependent. To date: Newham, Tower Hamlets and Hackney.

Findings

Funding sources

Multiple grants, including lottery funding, and pursuing some activities that enable a small income. Core Landscapes collaborates with the East London Business Alliance (ELBA) to connect with the corporate sector and corporate social responsibility for CSR days.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

Planning has been required for most sites, but this is dependent on where the site is and the proposals of the scheme. Planning permission was required for their Whitechapel site, now closed.

Communication strategy

Use press and media to engage with local communities, corporate businesses and funding partners. Core Landscapes ensures that the purpose of the charity and each meanwhile site is clearly understood by beneficiaries, volunteers and the local community and ensures a legacy is provided for when any site comes to an end.

Operation management

Core Landscapes is a Core Arts project, managed by part-time employees and volunteers. As a charity, monitoring is important. Outcomes are monitored according to the individual and what is required from funders. A range of feedback forms and surveys, case studies, Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Health Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), skill set monitoring and interviews with individuals are used.

Long-term strategy

They have clear aims as a charity for mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, every project they do must deliver a wellbeing legacy, teaching beneficiaries horticultural skills and providing respite for patients when located on hospital sites. Impact can also feed into dialogue with local authorities, developers and planners to think creatively about protecting access to green spaces.

Problems encountered

Vulnerability regarding leases and clear agreements with and between landowners.

Positive outcomes

Beneficiaries report increased mental health wellbeing and go on to use the skills learnt. Beneficiaries, volunteers and visitors acknowledge the need for pro-active green spaces in the urban environment to benefit mental wellbeing.

Takeaways

- A clear aim and objective of the meanwhile use assists with identifying an appropriate site.
- If the site does not work for the meanwhile objective, whether for planning issues or funding problems, use the time to find another appropriate site.
- Building relationships with local authorities and other professionals within the industry related to the meanwhile use is key.
- Ensure there is sufficient time at the site to enable the meanwhile use to operate successfully, achieve its objectives.

Further information & sources: corearts.co.uk/core-landscapes

Dalston Eastern Curve Garden



Summary

Location

Dalston, London E8.

Status

Active since 2010.

Objective

To break down barriers to community cohesion, combat social isolation and to bring residents and neighbours together through year-round activities, volunteering, events, and educational workshops.

Target audience

Local children, musicians, young people, business volunteers.

Project overview

An allotment space and event venue, providing green space in one of London's most densely built up boroughs, whilst encouraging social cohesion.

Space typology

Open space (former railway).

Use

Community garden and café.

Key Actors

 **Space provider** Hackney Council.

 **Funder** London Development Authority.

 **Enabler** Flagship partnership project 'Making Space in Dalston' commissioned by Design for London, which brought Hackney Council and local residents and groups together with muf architects/art and J&L Gibbons Landscape Architects.

 **Facilitator** Design for London.

 **Decision Maker** Hackney Council.

Findings

Funding sources

The Café's proceeds pay for the operation of the garden, education programmes and community events. Volunteered efforts and donations also contribute significantly. Additionally, there is a £5 charge for attending events.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

Granted by Hackney Council. The land forms part of a wider council development area.

Communication strategy

The garden hosts a series of open community events and workshops. All events are well advertised on the garden's website, as well as via mailing list.

Operation management

Managed as a social enterprise.

Long-term strategy

The first stage of a Hackney Council public consultation on the 'Dalston Quarter' finished on 30 April 2017. The 'Dalston Quarter Development Principles Public Consultation' document outlined their redevelopment plans and ambitions for the buildings and land they own in and around Dalston Lane and Ashwin Street. There is a conflict here between the Council's development ambitions and supporters of the garden. Conversations are ongoing on possibilities to relocate the garden elsewhere.

Problems encountered

The garden cannot be maintained entirely by lay volunteers. Repairing footpaths, for example, requires skills and/or equipment. This, in turn, requires capital.

Positive outcomes

- A design and construction apprenticeship scheme for local young men was created in partnership with the local Youth Hub for the barn construction.
- Wider health benefits have arisen from the garden. Tree planting has improved air quality, offset pollution from local roads and provides shade during hot summer days.
- Vegetable planting has provided leisure for locals whilst also creating resources for the Café to be able to serve home grown food which could then be sold to reinvest in the garden.

Takeaways

- The outcome of a public-private partnership initiated by Design for London.
- An example of controversy arising from legacy issues: the Council's development ambitions are deemed inappropriate by some users of the garden.

Further information & sources: <http://dalstongarden.org/>

PLACE

Ladywell Housing

Summary

Location

Site of the former Ladywell Leisure Centre, London SE13.

Status

Active (opened in 2016 and finishing in Autumn 2020).

Objective

To respond to the high demand for housing in the borough of Lewisham. This temporary housing development was rapidly constructed using an innovative construction method, providing 24 homes for local people in housing need and four community/retail units.

Target audience

To rehouse local people living in poor quality temporary accommodation. Additionally, to provide community/retail space for local residents, while catalysing regeneration for all.

Project overview

Winner of the Mayor of London's Prize, New London Architecture and Temporary Building Award, New London Architecture, this project provides temporary housing and community space.

Space typology






On an open site left following the demolition of a leisure centre in 2014.

Use

Housing, retail and community space.



Key Actors

 Space provider	Lewisham Council provided the site which was vacant pending re-development.
 Funder	Lewisham Council.
 Enabler	Meanwhile Space CIC.
 Facilitator	Lewisham Council. The Council approached architects Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, AECOM and contractor SIG Build to develop the temporary project.
 Decision Maker	Lewisham Council.

Findings

Funding sources

Lewisham Council, with support from the Mayor of London.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

The site is designated by the Lewisham Town Centre local plan as a site for mixed use, including retail and housing. Permission was granted for land uses and construction in 2015, ending in 2020.

Communication strategy

Council identifies families in need to be housed by the project.

Operation management

Lewisham Council manage the temporary housing, and work in partnership with Meanwhile Space CIC to manage the co-working, retail and community spaces.

Long-term strategy

The intention is for the project to remain on site for no more than four years, after which it will be deconstructed, moved and reconstructed elsewhere in the borough. This is possible because the finished structure is fully demountable, meaning it can be used in different locations (with a design life of up to 60 years).

Problems encountered

Some residents reported that the terminology used to refer to the housing – i.e. as ‘pop-up’ – reminded residents of their provisional residential status.

Positive outcomes

- A trailblazing example of a ‘portable village’, which has subsequently inspired similar affordable housing projects.
- Each home cost approximately 20% less than a typical council home.

Takeaways

- A project utilising modern methods of construction which can easily be disassembled and reassembled in other vacant sites, continuing the legacy of the project.
- A council-instigated meanwhile project.

Further information & sources

placeladywell.co.uk/

lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/regeneration/lewishamtowncentre/place-ladywell

Meanwhile Gardens

Summary

Location

North Kensington, London W10.

Status

Active since 1976, although there are plans created by the Council to redevelop the site.

Objective

To be used by numerous local groups: locals can volunteer and gain horticultural skills and qualifications; workshops and classes teach the community and school children about healthy living; the space hosts events to build community relationships and awareness of different cultures.

Target audience

Local children, local musicians, volunteers, and the elderly.

Project overview

Despite being deemed 'meanwhile', the allotment and garden space has been a place for children, elderly and young people to socialise and grow crops since 1976, making use of the previously derelict site.

Space typology

Open space.

Use

Community garden.



Key Actors

 **Space provider** Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council.

 **Funder** Jamie McCollough (an individual).

 **Enabler** Jamie McCollough.

 **Facilitator** Jamie McCollough.

 **Decision Maker** Members of the garden and Kensington and Chelsea Council.

Findings

Funding sources

A membership scheme where a payment of £10 supports the ongoing work of the gardens, as well as providing access to the children's play hut and to an annual meeting for decision making about the garden. Garden-related merchandise is also for sale.

Refurbishment funded by landscape architects Planet Earth, with support from the National Lottery and British Waterways Board.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

Jamie McCollough secured permits with the Council in 1976.

Communication strategy

Jamie McCollough spoke to the local community to raise awareness, and a book about the garden and its mission. Channel 4 also commissioned a documentary about the gardens in 1981. The garden organisation has its own website which publicises activities, sends out email updates and advertises membership.

Operation management

Meanwhile Gardens
Community Association.

Long-term strategy

The gardens have remained 'meanwhile' for almost half a century. However, the Council intends to redevelop the now high-value land. The community is trying to secure a lease to keep the gardens in permanent operation.

Problems encountered

- Some of the garden's facilities, such as the factory building, are in desperate need of repair.
- The gardens require maintenance which cannot be entirely done by volunteers – for example, maintenance of the wildlife garden which requires specialist labour.

Positive outcomes

- Volunteers take ownership of their work which creates a strong motivation to upkeep the gardens.
- The play hut is a purpose built eco-friendly community centre for young children up to the age of six, creating a safe place to play in a busy city.
- The gates to the garden are always open, and anyone is welcome to visit and use the gardens.

Takeaways

- Arose from the initiative of an individual.
- Funds itself primarily through membership fees and donations.

Further information & sources

meanwhile-gardens.org.uk/

amazon.co.uk/Meanwhile-Gardens-Jamie-McCullough/dp/0903319136

Pop Brixton

Summary

Location

Former car park in Brixton, London SW9.

Status

Active (built in 2014 and opened in 2015).

Objective

To transform underutilised land into a creative space supporting local enterprise and employment. Additionally, to support broader regeneration and economic growth plans for the Brixton area and to help inform what should come next on the site.

Target audience

Local, independent businesses, local people and visitors from London, UK and internationally.

Project overview

A temporary conversion of vacant land into a retail and social enterprise space comprised of 55 repurposed shipping containers, seating areas and an events space. Retail includes street food kiosks, restaurants, fashion boutiques, and homeware stores.

Space typology






Open space.

Use

Mix of commercial, restaurants, social enterprise, community space.



Key Actors

 Space provider	Lambeth Council (land provided at peppercorn rent + 50% net profit share as part of wider Future Brixton regeneration and development scheme).
 Funder	Privately funded through Make Shift.
 Enabler	Make Shift (delivery & management team), Carl Turner Architects did the design.
 Facilitator	Lambeth Council (launched a competition for ideas to transform the vacant site into a meanwhile use & subsequently provided the land for peppercorn rent + 50% net profit share).
 Decision Maker	Lambeth Council.

Findings

Funding sources

Site provided by Lambeth Council for peppercorn rent + 50% net profit share. Ongoing rent from commercial space leases for the 14500 square feet of workspace created.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

The site of Pop Brixton is designated by Lambeth's Local Plan for mixed-use development with retail, commercial, community, leisure, residential, car and cycling parking. Pop Brixton's successful planning application in 2014 sought temporary use for a period of 5 years, and permission to install shipping containers with a mix of land use classes. Permission was granted until 2017, subsequently extended to 2020, and an application has been submitted to extend until 2024.

Communication strategy

Regarded by the community and Make Shift themselves as much improved, but with more to be done. Project began with a pre-existing idea of what the community needed and sought to meet these needs without first asking the community what they themselves wanted.

Operation management

Make Shift.

Long-term strategy

Regarded by the community and Make Shift themselves as much improved, but with more to be done. Project began with a pre-existing idea of what the community needed and sought to meet these needs without first asking the community what they themselves wanted.

Problems encountered

- Challenges at the inception stage. Permission originally given for an alternative project Grow:Brixton. The delivery team fell apart and the project morphed into Pop Brixton. More detailed due diligence at the procurement stage could have identified potential delivery issues.
- Controversy. Some local do not make use of or like the scheme and have made accusations of it representing gentrification.
- Failure to make profit within the original 3 year lease term.

Positive outcomes

- 400+ hours free event space for community groups per annum, 200+ independent enterprises supported at any one time of which 70%+ are Lambeth residents, 250+ jobs.
- £9M+GVA for local economy each year. 10 supported units at 20-50% market rate. 1% revenue donated to the Make Shift Foundation, delivering access to enterprise and employment programmes for 16-25 year old.

Takeaways

- Insufficient communication with the local community during initial stages of the build and operation. This has been improved in the case of Peckham Levels, and further for the upcoming Make Shift meanwhile project in Hackney Wick.

Further information & sources: popbrixton.org/

lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Pop-Brixton-Evaluation-18.0104.pdf

Story Garden

Summary

Location

King's Cross, London NIC.

Status

Active (from 2009 to present). Since Autumn 2019 the Skip Garden has closed and become the Story Garden on a three-acre vacant site behind The British Library. A permanent Skip Garden site is being planned at King's Cross.

Objective

To work with local children, residents and businesses to grow food and create environmentally responsible communities through engagement and social cohesion.

Target audience

Local young residents, wider community and businesses.

Project overview

A moveable urban food growing garden that works within the wider King's Cross masterplan area. It has changed locations across the site as plots have been developed.

Space typology

Open space.

Use

Urban garden and community space.



Key Actors



Space provider

Argent for the Skip Garden which is the developer/landowner and part of the King's Cross Central Partnership (KCCP). Site provider for the Story Garden is The British Library. Landowners are Argent, the KCCP and the British Library.



Funder

Half of Global Generation's income is through grant funding and half is through earned income such as local garden commission, venue hire, training and consultancy.



Enabler

Global Generation, an educational charity. Jan Kattein Architects developed the design.

Findings

Funding sources

50% is through grants. Additionally, all proceeds from training, consultancy, events and garden commissions go toward supporting local young people and communities to connect to nature in the middle of the city and grow themselves.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

Camden Council granted planning permissions for the use of temporary gardens. Global Generation holds a 2 year lease with British Library for Story Garden and previously held a lease with Argent for the Skip Garden.

Communication strategy

First, the charity made contact with Argent and has continued to foster this relationship. When Global Generation needed to move again with land currently available on the King's Cross development they contacted British Library.

Operation management

Global Generation.

Long-term strategy

Regarded by the community and Make Shift themselves as much improved, but with more to be done. Project began with a pre-existing idea of what the community needed and sought to meet these needs without first asking the community what they themselves wanted.

Problems encountered

- Global Generation highlights the difficulty of juggling numerous responsibilities as a charity organisation. Securing funding and resourcing to sustain projects is challenging.
- Never had a defined duration for any site. Having a good relationship with the landowner and a flexible approach to working as well as a flexible approach to building is critical.

Positive outcomes

- The Skip Garden moved around the King's Cross development site, onto four different locations, and has become an integral part of the regeneration vision. When Global Generation move from the Story Garden, they will set up a permanent Skip Garden within the long-term development because of its social impact and value.
- As a charity, all projects are driven by the social aims of the projects and ensure benefits spread into the wider community.

Takeaways

- Building and retaining good relationships with key stakeholders; landowners, local authority, community, architects etc. is crucial.
- An example of a project which has relocated several times and will have a legacy impact.

Further information & sources

globalgeneration.org.uk/skip-garden-and-kitchen-1

Camden Collective

Summary

Location

Camden, London NW1.

Status

Active since 2009.

Objective

To support London's creative community of start-up businesses by providing affordable temporary workspaces in vacant buildings or on vacant sites.

Target audience

Local creative start-ups.

Project overview

Camden Collective is a registered charity offering free hot-desk workspace and subsidised offices for creative start-ups in the heart of Camden Town. They take on temporary leases of empty buildings and vacant sites providing positive economic and social benefits for the local area.

Space typology






Vacant buildings and sites.

Use

Affordable workspace.



Key Actors

 Space provider	Various private and public-sector landlords, currently TfL.
 Funder	In the past, the Collective relied on grants and raising revenue. It is now fully self-sufficient.
 Enabler	Camden Collective, an independent charity started by the Camden Town Business Improvement District (BID).
 Facilitator	Camden Town Unlimited (BID for Camden Town).
 Decision Maker	Camden Collective, Camden Council.

Findings

Funding sources

Income from monthly user service charge contributes to the running costs of the project and any renovations needed to maintain the hub. Camden Collective covers the costs of business rates, utilities and security.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

Relevant permits are acquired and building in line with regulations, however planning permission not required.

Communication strategy

A clear communication strategy is established with tenants providing details on lease and a structured tenancy agreement. Strong relationships with Camden Council and the BID ensure a smoother communication process at a strategic and political level.

Operation management

Camden Town Unlimited, the BID for Camden Town has created a standard model of operation for each of its sites. Camden Collective pays a peppercorn rent to landowners in exchange for occupying a vacant building. Land is required for a minimum of one year and control of building access must be guaranteed during occupancy. As a charity, applicable for business rate relief.

Long-term strategy

Since 2009, Camden Collective has occupied 18 spaces and has introduced various projects, such as: pop-up shops, free courses, accelerators, commissioning public realm projects, free events, and the Camden Create Festival. The provision of affordable workspace boosts local business opportunities, creates jobs and provides skills across the wider local community.

Problems encountered

- Getting lease agreements finalised and having access to the space is the greatest challenge.
- Wider local community and customers can become attached the pop ups.

Positive outcomes

- The creation of a collaborative environment where interaction and knowledge-sharing between businesses is encouraged in to support start-ups and social capital is created and supported.
- Having built a business model and positive relationships within the borough, landowners now approach Camden Collective. Although they do also actively seek sites.

Takeaways

- Clear communication of a strategy and idea is key as well as building strong relationships with local authorities and other key stakeholders, in particular building a relationship directly with the landowner to work transparently.
- Be realistic with regard to the type of site available and whether this suits the proposed meanwhile use.
- A BID can take greater risks than other independent actors due to the existing relationships and funding streams available.

Further information & sources
camdencollective.co.uk/
camdentownunlimited.com/new-page-1

What If? Vacant Lots

Summary

Location

21+ sites across London, currently new site being developed at Livesey Exchange, (within the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (AAP)).

Status

Active since May 2007.

Objective

Aimed at engaging the local community into creating spaces that address local needs for i.e. skill building or being outdoors.

Target audience

Local communities.

Project overview

Reactivation of underused and vacant spaces through community led projects.

Space typology

Allotments, workshops and communal space.

Use

Community gardens, skill building and space for cultural programmes.



Key Actors

 Space provider	Local authorities.
 Funder	Historically, The Big Lottery Fund, Islington Community Chest, Housing Associations, current projects source funding from the GLA, LB Southwark, Spacehive crowdfunding and in-kind support.
 Enabler	GLA (funding and project support).
 Facilitator	What If Projects Ltd.
 Decision Maker	Local authorities, land owners, funding bodies.

Findings

Funding sources

Multiple grants and crowdfunding.

Permissions and Permits/licencing

Spaces have been provided by public sector landlords (either local authority or housing association). Planning permissions required in some cases.

Communication strategy

A communication strategy is key though there is no standard approach to this. Communication with the local community and beneficiaries is vital at the beginning and throughout a project. Additionally, communication with contacts within key organisations such as the GLA can be crucial to lever support.

Operation management

Relies on community groups, volunteers or new social enterprises to run the project. Management can be in partnership with housing association/local authority depending on site, scale and requirements. Support and training of management team is required to ensure long term sustainability.

Long-term strategy

In addition to What-If projects, the allotment idea has been taken on by other resident's associations and community organisations. Seed funding for temporary projects resulted in upscaling and longer term projects. Delivery of community led project builds capacity locally.

Problems encountered

- Underestimated the challenge of securing suitable sites. A site must be appropriate for use, accessible to wide group of people and have access to basic infrastructure such as water and power.

- Bringing together and coordinating diverse council departments, stakeholder groups and funding streams.

Positive outcomes

- Skills and training are provided to local communities
- The proposed Livesey Exchange on Old Kent Road will be on site for 15 years creating community focused spaces and workshops in an area undergoing intense housing intensification. Housed within a modular, open plan structure it will have the potential to be reconstructed elsewhere.
- 21 allotments were created on housing estates where people grow food, and socialise. Seed funding has had ripple effect resulting in wider improvements to the housing estates.

Takeaways

- Early engagement and a good working relationship with local authorities and other relevant stakeholders and local actors is key in accessing sites and funding.
- To achieve social value, sites are required to be in operation longer than one year. For temporary projects to be meaningful, a long term strategy is needed for the social capital generated not to be lost.
- Choose your battle. Be clear what can be achieved and delivered well in a short timeframe.
- Design is important in creating good spaces. It also helps with the communication of the project to the wider public. Certain design approaches such as modular construction can be cost effective and offer flexibility.

Further information & sources:

what-if.info/vacant-lot.info
liveseyexchange.com



Blue House Yard, © Jan Kattein Architects

04

Findings and Analysis

This section draws together findings and analysis that emerged through the research process. The research identified several shared objectives, outcomes and impacts as well as existing challenges and future opportunities. These are explored through three key themes: planning, funding and people.

The analysis outlines the value of existing meanwhile uses in London and their future potential. It explores the different business models that could be applied to increase the value and success of meanwhile uses as well as identifying the importance of advocating meanwhile use within policy and governance.

The value of meanwhile

Through analysis of the operation of meanwhile uses and discussions with meanwhile actors, it can be summarised that the concept of meanwhile in London is neither functional to, nor disruptive of, the existing systems, whether that be planning, economic or political agendas. Rather, meanwhile is a practice that simply responds to opportunity; the opportunity to deliver benefits and drive value.

It is evident that each meanwhile use has been able to successfully find and occupy vacant sites across the capital, driven by an appreciation that these sites have much to offer when activated. A commonality across projects is that they all apply meanwhile uses to a vacant site with the aim of responding to a particular (local) need. Whether that be social, economic and or environmental, all seek to deliver a 'public service' or community offer that the standard development model and market is slow to, or in some cases fails to deliver, from supporting the environment, health and wellbeing to providing affordable workspace. Meanwhile projects engage civic society and think about how the short and intermediate term can inform the longer term vision.

Through a transitional approach to urban development, these small but persistent forms of development are changing the way we think about space and time. The flexibility of meanwhile uses provides the impetus to think more creatively about policy implications and create space for debate around public participation, finance structures and wider urban governance.

Although meanwhile uses are not a panacea to all urban issues, the cases analysed suggest such uses drive a need for more inclusive and socially more sensitive developments. A complementary approach to improving existing urban issues whilst simultaneously offering sources of innovation and creativity.

Covid-19: Resilience outcomes

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, through follow-up discussions with some of the meanwhile use actors behind some of the case studies in this report, it is evident that their ability to quickly adapt to changing environments and circumstances has ensured their survival. Through a variety of different methods, from seeking new funding streams, providing support to businesses and tenants through rent relief and quickly adapting to online methods of remote working to stay connected to their communities and user groups, the case studies have not only secured their position within their respective localities but enhanced their business and social networks and built resilience for their future growth. Although it has been challenging with amendments being made to address Covid-19 social distancing and safety guidelines, the actors we interviewed are confident in their future and are re-assured by their capacity to adapt and evolve. They see meanwhile uses as critical to London's growth, innovation and affordability. In a post-pandemic reality, meanwhile uses can provide support to local communities and opportunity to address critical needs and it seems demand is only increasing.

Long-term impact and building a legacy

Meanwhile uses are valuable and can enable powerful approaches to development for many actors, from developers to local authorities and community groups. They can provide opportunities for community interaction and growth, or trial adaptive new uses such as affordable workspace. However, for some actors the term 'meanwhile use' has a negative relationship, for example it has been associated in the past with gentrification and disenfranchisement of areas. As a result, it can be difficult to implement and, in some cases, turn into a practice that is viewed as problematic.

Examples like the Story Garden or Pop Brixton, however, prove that a solid, organised and transparent engagement process throughout the lifetime of the use, together with a clear exit strategy is critical to the success of meanwhile use.

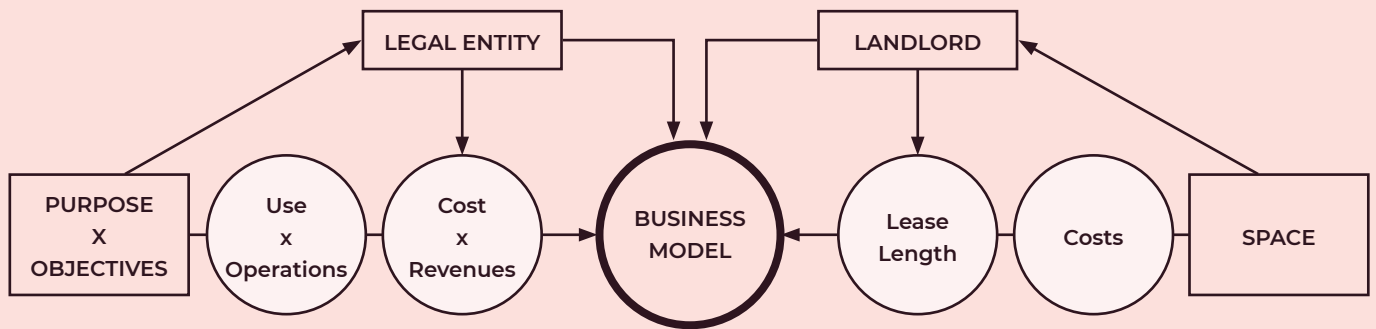
Involvement of all the different actors, mainly with local authorities as decision makers, communities as main beneficiaries and land owners, aligned with a strong communication process will assist in managing expectations in the long-term and fostering meaningful outcomes. Most importantly, ensuring that there is continuity between the short-term use and long-term outcome.

Setting an approach to engagement at the early stages of a project can help to identify the need and inform buy-in and equally, maintaining engagement throughout the lifetime of the project helps to monitor success, aid transition and build resilient social networks. Ensuring the use of these mechanisms will facilitate a smooth exit strategy, beneficial long-term impacts and deliver a legacy that reaches beyond the physical site itself.

Similarly, an exit strategy can also assist with the physical components of a site and ensure the use is sustainable in the long-term. There is opportunity to enable materials to be upcycled or re-used within the permanent development itself.

Many of the perceived limitations and challenges of meanwhile uses can be addressed by making sure they form part of the overall strategy and are discussed at early concept and design stages with all stakeholders.

Recommendations on how to do this and guidance on implementing meanwhile use can be found in the following sections.



The meanwhile use business model

From our research, this section focusses on the operational phase of a meanwhile use—which models are deployed and what drives them.

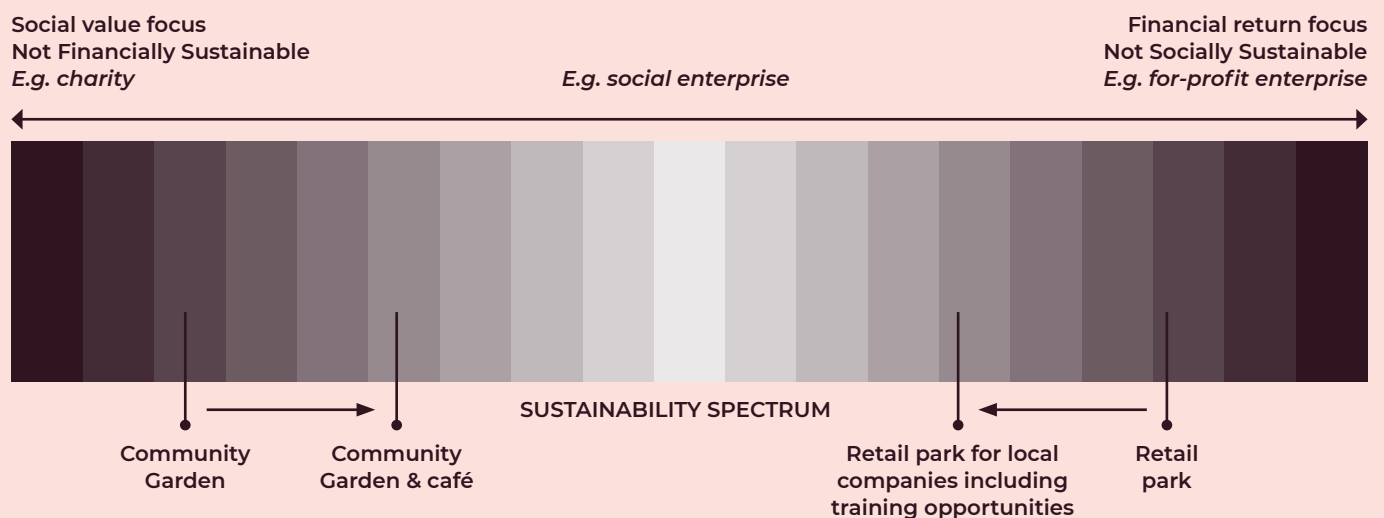
The relative affordability and de-risking of short-term leases of unused spaces (compared to traditional, longer-term leases) is one of the key differentiators of the meanwhile use business model.

A business model encompasses the set of activities and relationships developed by an organisation to create and deliver value to its stakeholders. Meanwhile uses are based on a unique business model compared to a ‘normal’ business, because the business is time-constrained, and the fixed capital cost of property tends to be relatively inexpensive. Accordingly, new types of organisations—some with short-term focus or which require lower costs of entry to the market—develop business models for meanwhile uses.

Ultimately, the business model of a meanwhile use is driven by two key aspects:

1. the **purpose** and **objectives** it seeks to address, and
2. the **space** it occupies over a period of **time**.

The interaction of those two elements eventually determine the meanwhile use cost structure and opportunities to generate revenues to sustain its operations.



OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

Existing examples of meanwhile urbanism in London (and in the rest of the world) serve two broad categories of objectives, one is driven by a commercial and revenue-optimising approach, and the other, has social value as its focus.

While these objectives—social value and financial return—are not mutually exclusive, many meanwhile uses are located at one end of the spectrum—either generating much social value, but reliant on grants, or very commercially successful, but not contributing much to social or environmental value. Meanwhile uses which contribute to the social value of the city as well as being financially sustainable will contribute most to the economic and social resilience of the city (see Figure on p.72). However, a fully socially-focussed use would typically be entirely reliant on grants and subsidies. Conversely, a commercially focused use would be financially independent but might not generate many wider social or environmental outcomes.

Some meanwhile uses start at one end—socially-focussed or commercially-focussed—and evolve to incorporate more of the other. Several uses were kick-started with public grants to develop a socially-minded use, for example, and evolve further into the sustainability spectrum by developing commercial activities supporting their social purpose.

The nature of the meanwhile uses' objectives determines its actual use and operations, its cost and revenue structures as well as the legal entity that will enable it to create and deliver the value that best serves its purpose.

SPACE AND TIME

The second critical element that shapes the business model of a meanwhile use is the space it occupies over a period of time. Because meanwhile spaces are usually vacant and not commercially attractive in the market, the rental arrangements will be different than a traditional rental agreement. The occupation arrangement set up with the landlord will determine the:

- rent to be paid (often free or below market rent), and
- type of financial contribution to cover the service charges associated with the operation and maintenance of the space.

One of the most influential aspects of a meanwhile use business model is the time dimension associated with the length of the lease for a specific space. In addition, whether there is the possibility to extend the lease, to rotate that meanwhile use to another site, or the potential to embed the use into a permanent space will all affect the business plan and commercial terms of occupation.

Early in the development process, the time available to operate will dictate the level of investment and the ambition of the meanwhile use. The longer the period of time, the longer the window of opportunity to:

- Establish the activities on-site and build up a customer / user base
- Improve processes
- Benefit from economies of scale
- Amortise initial investments before turning a profit and gain a positive return on investment, and
- Reach a desired level of social impact.

The length of the lease will also impact the level of risk associated with the financing of a meanwhile use, which can be essential given that meanwhile uses are usually unable to back financing with property or assets. A longer lease period, therefore, can reduce the uncertainties around the probability of a meanwhile use not being able to recoup an investment or to generate enough social impact to fulfil the objectives laid out by a donor.



A need for advocacy

The success of the case studies and the ability to create successful and bespoke business models suggests there needs to be greater acknowledgement of meanwhile uses as a practice. In addition to recognising its tangible outputs, there is also a need to better understand the less tangible but beneficial impacts of meanwhile; the social impacts that allow us to question how we plan for the city and the need to look beyond standardised models and everyday practice.

A common factor amongst all cases is their desire to inform or have some positive impact on the urban environment and local communities in the long-term. The schemes demonstrate that where there is value to be extracted from meanwhile use and a political willingness to activate, the two can work together.

A large diversity of local actors are working to re-establish the critical relationship between people and place by (re)activating vacant urban spaces and animating community life through the use of meanwhile interventions. There is momentum building between meanwhile actors and a growing awareness of the need for greater engagement, not only with the communities in which they take shape but also at a governance level. This is seen across all case studies, where they respond to social need or deal with broader issues local people see as significant, there still remains a key challenge that is common to all; the need for systemic support.

These actors seek to make meaningful contributions to the future of the city, primarily thinking in social outputs and environmental enhancements. A commonality across all projects is that they hold at their heart a belief that change is possible despite economic or systemic obstacles. Meanwhile uses engage but more importantly begin to interact with politics, the standardised models and systems of development and the urban fabric.

Whilst planning for the permanent remains a crucial component for London's future strategic development, analysis suggests standard models and methods of development, including planning and funding mechanisms, also need to recognise and respond to the opportunities meanwhile uses can deliver in respect of the short and intermediate-term needs of the city. Actors across all cases acknowledge a need to normalise to some degree the use or at least recognition of meanwhile to build legitimacy and enable innovation and experimentation.

If acknowledged and applied effectively, it has been evidenced that meanwhile uses offer intuitive opportunities that are seemingly proficient at addressing some of the most aspirational and complex goals of today's urban context; the need to create diverse, resilient and sustainable cities and communities.

IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

From this research we have identified several key challenges and opportunities identified for meanwhile space activation in London.

Planning

CHALLENGES

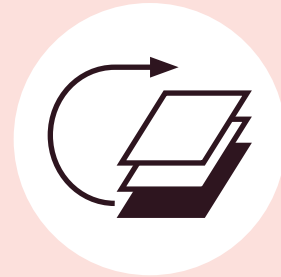
Evidence suggests the planning system has the potential to be more flexible in terms of advocating meanwhile uses as well as providing greater support through the planning application process.

The following are key barriers and challenges for meanwhile uses that have been identified, from a planning perspective:



PLANNING APPLICATION TECHNICALITIES

In addition to an 8-week planning application determination period, it is also the time and cost required to produce the supporting information that can be a challenge. In some cases, it may not be clear what supporting information is required, especially if no clear contact with the local planning authority has been established or pre-application discussions had. Often, supporting information such as a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, and drawings of floor plans and elevations, require technical input. This requires time, funding and the establishment of a design/consultant team.



PRIORITISATION IN LOCAL PLANS

The priority given to meanwhile uses by local planning authorities can vary greatly. It has been noted, there are vast differences in the degree to which local authorities advocate meanwhile use projects, the priority it has within a local development plan, along with the experience they have in supporting applicants.



PLANNING APPLICATION COST

The planning application process, involving pre-application discussions and the planning application itself are subject to a fee. This can be quite substantive depending on the scale of the project in question and subsequently can impact project budgets. The fee level does not reflect the temporary nature of the scheme.



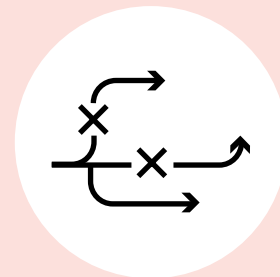
PLANNING APPLICATION TIME AND COSTS

The planning application process can be onerous. The determination period of a planning application for a meanwhile use can impact on the project programme and ultimately the time in which the meanwhile use can be in operation. This is a challenge for meanwhile uses that require planning but have a very short activation period, for example two years or less as they need to be operational as soon as possible to have any beneficial outputs. A planning application for meanwhile use applies the same statutory assessment and determination period of 8 weeks as a full planning application. Within this 8-week determination period, the local authority is obliged to publicise and consult on the application for a period of 21 days. This gives the public the opportunity to express views and comment on the proposals. As with any application, this will only be a barrier if insufficient consultation has been carried out prior to a submission, and there is a lack of support for a scheme proposal.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The ability to build relationships with local authorities is highly dependent on the local authority in question. It can be challenging to establish first contact with a local planning authority and it often takes time to build a positive and supportive relationship. In practice, often, local authorities provide minimal assistance given resource and budget constraints. The ability to engage and receive advice in relation to meanwhile uses is often dependent on the existing connections of the applicant.



LACK OF FLEXIBILITY

The planning use-class system can prove inflexible for certain meanwhile use opportunities, despite recent changes to legislation. For temporary uses, flexibility could be provided by changing the use to the occupier rather than the building.

OPPORTUNITIES

There are many opportunities to create a more meanwhile-friendly approach to planning; one that is more proactive to responding to meanwhile opportunities and in establishing a meanwhile narrative within the wider planning policy context. There are opportunities that exist within the existing framework which could lead to 'quick wins' in addressing some current challenges, as well as opportunities in the longer term.



COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

CIL, as introduced by the Planning Act 2008 and the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended), is a charge that local authorities and the Mayor of London can impose on new developments to fund essential infrastructure required to support growth. There is the potential for local authorities to use CIL funding at a borough level as an enabler to help deliver infrastructure to secure early site activation, with the potential to include meanwhile uses, particularly in relation to wider regeneration funding streams.

With the revocation of the need to produce a Regulation 12363 list in September 2019, local authorities will instead be required to publish an infrastructure funding statement[1]. These statements are required to set out the infrastructure projects that the authority intends to fund either wholly or partly by CIL or s106 contributions, though this will not dictate how CIL funds must be spent and in turn collected.

In the context of regeneration schemes and large scale phased development, CIL funding could be used to enable early infrastructure provision that facilitates the delivery of a wider meanwhile use strategy.

NOTE: A local authority cannot draw s106 contributions for the same project or type of infrastructure being funded by CIL.



PLANNING CONDITIONS

Local authorities could seek to impose conditions that require a meanwhile use scheme. For example, where development proposals are appropriate for meanwhile activities and early activation in terms of placemaking, particularly within large-scale phased development. This would provide a condition for developers to deliver meanwhile uses on certain sites.



SECURING MEANWHILE USES FOR EARLY-ACTIVATION

Local authorities in London regularly seek to secure financial contributions to fund on and off-site infrastructure which could include infrastructure for early site activation, including meanwhile uses. There are two main routes to securing such contributions; Section 106 (S106) Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

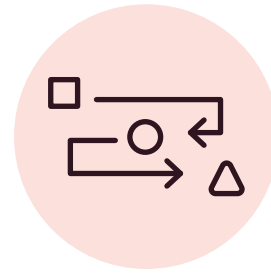
PLANNING OBLIGATIONS (S106 AGREEMENTS)

Local authorities could seek to secure s106 planning obligations on certain sites for the provision of site activation schemes, including meanwhile uses with the aim of enhancing and integrating new development. In addition, development proposals could be required to submit a Meanwhile Feasibility Study and if deemed feasible, an appropriate Meanwhile Strategy. Such a use, prior to any given construction phase, should promote economic, environmental and social value and can help shape the long-term development by testing different uses in different spaces. Seeking a good design and standard of amenity can define and improve the sense of place and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing. These are core planning principles set out in the NPPF, draft London Plan and local policies.

This is more aligned to large scale phased developments. Meanwhile uses are a valuable tool and can become a planning tool for enabling early delivery of longer term regeneration benefits and play a key role in early placemaking and raising the profile of an area.

From September 2019, restrictions on the 'pooling' of s106 contributions to fund infrastructure were removed, presenting new opportunities for local authorities to develop an integrated approach to funding meanwhile uses across new developments.

This approach is dependent on the degree to which a local authority is willing to balance achieving s106 requirements and creating place. A meanwhile use secured through s106 obligations may be successful in occupying the space but has no obligation to specifically respond to an identified need. In addition, a s106 legal agreement can only be included if justified by planning policy. Acknowledgement and preparation for any required planning obligations should be integral to negotiation of land transactions, and the formulation of development proposals.



USING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDERS (LDOS)

LDOs are flexible and locally determined tools that can help accelerate the delivery of certain development in specific locations, enabling growth and proactively seeking sustainable forms of development in a more efficient manner. They allow councils to grant certain types of development specified in individual orders without planning permission, subject to certain conditions.

There is the potential for local authorities to establish LDOs across a development site or within a catchment area to enable these areas to be used in the short-term, to avoid being left vacant awaiting longer-term development. For example, an LDO for meanwhile uses could be prepared for a specific area, which sets out a series of planning and design parameters within which certain change of uses could be permitted to enable meanwhile uses to be established.

LDOs are suited to areas in which meanwhile uses may rotate across a larger area and provide the flexibility on uses permitted. They provide a strong option where there is no adopted local plan policy supporting meanwhile uses.



LONGER-TERM LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

Going forward, the planning system could do more to recognise meanwhile uses as viable and innovative tools within the spatial planning and city-visioning toolkit. This, however, would require legislative change.

To assist with creating a faster paced planning approach for meanwhile uses, a tailored system for meanwhile use applications could be applied, that would involve changes to the time, cost and flexibility of meanwhile use applications. This would require cross-government support.

1. Firstly, the determination period of certain meanwhile use proposals could be shortened. Similar to the standard application process, a threshold could be created to identify minor and major meanwhile use developments. This could be determined by the principal use within the proposed development, scale or longevity. Applications considered minor could be shortened to a 4-week determination period, with major applications remaining at 8 weeks.
2. The number of detailed application documents required could be reduced, providing a 'meanwhile-ready' package for minor applications. This could assist in delivering the meanwhile use in a more efficient time to maximise opportunity and benefit. It would need to be agreed with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, to confirm that certain documents are not required e.g. flood risk assessments.

3. Application fees could be reviewed. Introducing a pro-rata fee structure whereby the standard application fee is reduced to reflect the longevity of the proposed scheme. For example, 29 days to 1 years = 25% payable, 1-5 years = 50% and 6-10 year = 75%. Further amendments to the Use Class Order could also be made, providing a separate use class for meanwhile uses, which would also assist the fee structure.
4. Once planning permission has been granted, a time-limiting condition may be imposed, providing a date when the proposed scheme must cease and/or vacate the site. The draft London Plan states that boroughs should consider starting the time for the meanwhile use from the date of occupation rather than the date of planning permission, to support the viability and delivery of meanwhile developments. This would assist in lengthening periods of occupation, especially where issues around licensing and leasing may still be unresolved following a grant of planning permission.

However, meanwhile use applications should still be considered on a case by case basis. Such uses do still have an impact on sites and surrounding context and in many cases require the delivery of infrastructure, such as electricity and water and are impacted by existing conditions, such as flood risk. It is necessary to carry out due diligence and submit the appropriate supporting documents relevant to the scheme, demonstrating how the meanwhile use will address or mitigate any potential negative impacts.



Peckham Levels, ©Make Shift

CHALLENGES

Securing funding, earning a positive financial return in the short time period, and establishing a sustainable business model are the key obstacles to establishing a meanwhile use project.



SECURING FUNDING

Meanwhile uses tend to rely on grant funding, at least in the beginning. As meanwhile uses are often charities or may be perceived as unsustainable structures due to their time-constrained nature, securing capital is challenging. Meanwhile uses can be perceived as riskier investments due to limited time to realise a return on investment and a lack of any conventional land or property assets as securities.

EVALUATION AND DEMONSTRATING VALUE

There is no established evaluation mechanism to estimate the value generated from meanwhile projects—financially, socially or environmentally. The limited tools to evaluate meanwhile uses makes it harder to build evidence which demonstrates the value created. Grants usually have some form of outcomes tracking, but full evaluation or cost-benefit analysis is the exception. This information is important to secure future funding or to prove the role for meanwhile uses in long-term development strategy. It is important to choose the right metrics to evaluate the financial and social benefits, including land value uplift, perception shift, and the social value for the local community. Evaluating the social value can take additional time and resources which meanwhile projects do not have.



LEGACY

The uncertainty that often lies regarding the operating period of a project hinders the capacity of an operator to design a business model from the outset. The end goal may be to reach sustainability by the end of the lease, to rotate independently to a new site, or to integrate the commercial market for space. But these models will be dictated by the lease terms, and availability of the site, which can be highly uncertain at this critical business planning stage. This uncertainty can hinder planning for the project's legacy over the longer run.

MEASURING AND ACHIEVING GRANT CONDITIONS

Completing applications for funding can be onerous and requires a specific skill set. At times, grant requirements of monitoring and outputs of number jobs created, social value, and so forth can be challenging. In addition, targets can be set quite high (especially if on-site for a short period of time).

OPPORTUNITIES

Meanwhile projects present unique opportunities to develop innovative, versatile business models. There is the additional wider benefit of enhancing neighbourhoods and shaping more resilient communities. The following are key opportunities identified for meanwhile projects from a funding and business model perspective.

BUILDING VIRTUOUS ECOSYSTEMS

Meanwhile uses require close collaboration between the operator and a group of key stakeholders (such as the local council, the land owner and the local community). This collaboration aligns the goals of the operator with the needs and aspirations of these broader stakeholders, including the local community. Because their goals are aligned, both the meanwhile operator and the local stakeholders work towards their mutual benefit of the project, which can also help justify funding from these stakeholders.

TRADITIONAL FINANCING

Although meanwhile projects tend to be perceived as riskier options to traditional finance institutions, some meanwhile use operators have backed institutional loans with their on-site physical assets. Evolution in the design and construction are making it increasingly affordable to design modular assets and equipment at a site which can be shifted to a new site at the end of the lease. Those meanwhile spaces that have managed to acquire assets which can easily be lifted and shifted to a new space have been able to offer banks the possibility of backing their loans with physical assets.

EMERGING PARTICIPATIVE FUNDING TOOLS

Digital technologies, along with evolving consumer behaviours, have fostered the emergence of participative funding and financing tools (such as crowdfunding platforms). These platforms link local needs to local solutions and can give projects access to more affordable funding sources.

INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INTO THE BUSINESS MODEL

Meanwhile uses have the ability to prioritise other objectives than just cost recovery and revenue optimisation, to the benefit of more sustainable outcomes. Innovative business models unlocked by lighter cost structures help cater for more vulnerable and lower-income groups.

DEVELOPER FUNDING

Within large development schemes, meanwhile uses should be identified as part of the wider “infrastructure and / or development costs” that allow spaces to be brought to their maximum value for development. These development costs form a source of funding dedicated to the setting up of meanwhile projects on their sites or sites within the vicinity of the future development.

LOCALLY-RESPONSIVE VEHICLES FOR CHANGE

Meanwhile projects foster local urban economic development at the city and neighbourhood levels by introducing more affordable and flexible options for uses required by local communities. Meanwhile uses are immediate tools to experiment new uses, activate public spaces, and engage with local communities—to try something new the market has not been delivering under existing constraints.

SUPPORTIVE MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Discounts and exemptions on the business rates could play an important role in making meanwhile uses affordable. Existing tools, like small business discounts, charity discounts and others could help meanwhile projects, especially in their initial phases of operation. This could also include a division of business rates between occupier and landowner so responsibilities are shared.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY FUNDING

The potential of meanwhile projects to enhance the perception of a place is recognised by developers, local authorities and communities. By improving their environment, those projects have the potential to raise the profile of neighbourhoods and increase their footfall. This directly benefits the local business community, particularly retail, food and beverage, and leisure uses. Some Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have founded and fund meanwhile initiatives to support the local business environment.

People and administrative context

CHALLENGES

The challenge of improving meanwhile use as a practice requires reform in a few areas. Section 5 sets out how this can be achieved through a meanwhile use framework and Section 6 outlines several recommendations that the GLA could enact.



BESPOKE PROCESSES

There is a “matching” challenge to overcome as there is no one-size-fits-all framework. Every site, every actor and every use offer something different. It can take time to match available vacant land with suitable meanwhile use proposals, or vice versa, but also at a larger scale there is a lack of ‘know how’ amongst meanwhile use actors; how do I approach the project, what documents do I need to submit, what permissions do I need to obtain and who do I speak to?



ADMINISTRATIVE TIME AND COST

The administrative context, separate from planning, can be a major hindrance to the time a use can be on site. Negotiating the terms of lease, securing insurances and receiving licences can take a very long time, often restricting access to site. The administrative and legal costs involved with other permissions, such as meanwhile use leases, licenses and insurances can be high and can impact on the time and costs involved with delaying a meanwhile use. It is down to the applicant or occupier to ensure that the appropriate lease agreements and license applications are made to the appropriate third parties in advance of site occupation. This may run concurrently to a planning application but often can take longer and be more complex depending on the use and site involved. MHCLG have published guidance on meanwhile use leases for landlords.



LIMITED TIME TO DEVELOP THE PROJECT

Linked to funding, very short-term leases can make it very challenging to get a project up and running, secure an income and create valuable outputs, whether social, economic or environmental. The timeline of a lease ultimately defines what the meanwhile use can do. Many case studies cited the need for a minimum length of time. Those with affordable workspaces do not consider anything less than 10 years, otherwise the consensus was anything less than 2 to 3 years is a real challenge.



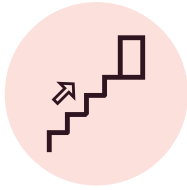
NEGOTIATING WITH LANDOWNERS

Public and private sector landowners can perceive meanwhile uses as a revenue generating use and therefore seek high rents. Evidence suggests meanwhile only works where the land is provided for free or at a peppercorn rent. It is hard to work with commercial landowners as it is difficult to demonstrate social value – this needs to be demonstrated to compete with commercial returns.

DEVELOPING A LEGACY

The creation of a legacy, whether left physically on site or through the social networks that have been created, also represents a key challenge. Often, it is not carefully considered at an early stage in the process.

OPPORTUNITIES



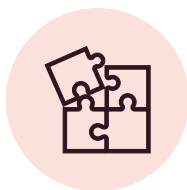
EXIT STRATEGY

An established 'exit strategy' should be created to ensure a social legacy is left following the projects. This is based on engagement with all stakeholders from the outset. There is also an opportunity to build in greater sustainability, such as ensuring any built assets are transferrable, or made from sustainable materials.



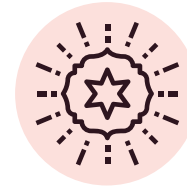
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION

There is great potential for local authorities to better promote and engage in meanwhile use projects. This is particularly true for public-sector owned land, which can be provided for at a peppercorn rent to projects deemed socially valuable. Inviting local people and organisations to put forward ideas for how to transform vacant lots helps to ensure that projects reflect community requirements.



IMPROVE MATCHING

Opportunity to create a tendering-like brokering service to bridge the missing piece that is often put forward in the meanwhile debate: the matching element. There is a need to enhance trust and responsibility around meanwhile and a public facilitator would help to address this. This could also assist in providing guidance to complete many of the administrative tasks required, such as how to write a good funding application.



BRANDING

There is a strong requirement to 're-brand' meanwhile use and strengthen its advocacy and support across the public and private sectors. A clear message and approach is required regarding the benefits of meanwhile use and how it can be delivered across the city. It can be better related to existing frameworks and other key priorities across London, drawing specifically on its resilience benefits.



BUILD A DATABASE OF SITES AND ACTORS

Create a database of meanwhile use actors as well as vacant sites suitable for meanwhile use activities. This could assist in making site identification more efficient and speed-up identifying the most appropriate users.



MANAGING EXPECTATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Communication with tenants as well as the wider community is key for managing expectations. Building and retaining good relationships with all key stakeholders; landowners, local authority, community, architects etc. is crucial. The creation of a clear message and communication strategy can provide the balance between facilitating a space that creates a springboard for users, to creating dependencies.

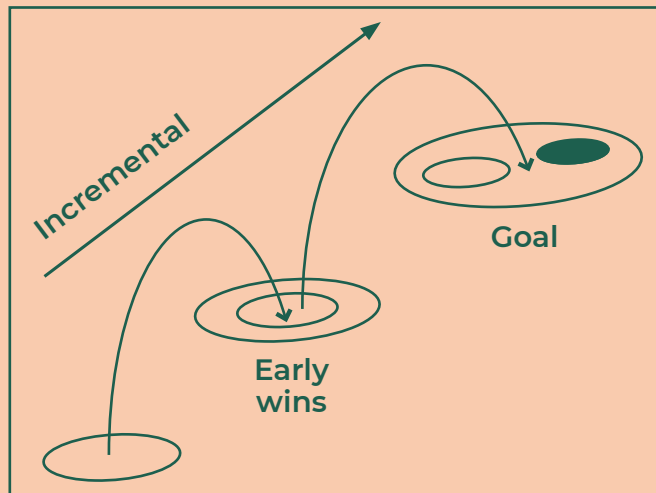


Camden Collective, ©Camden Town Unlimited

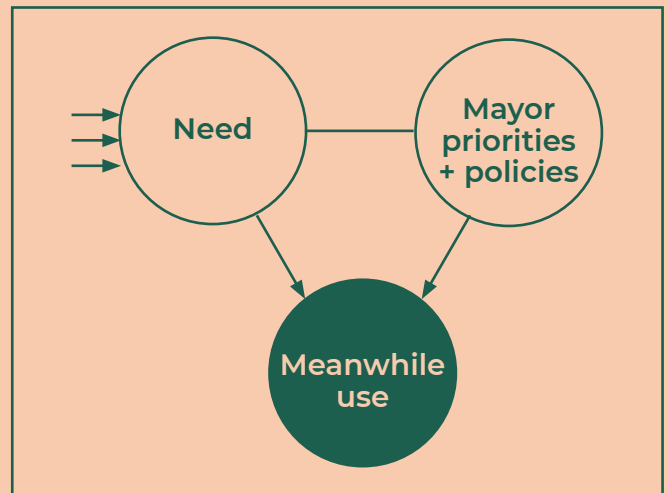
05

Meanwhile Use Framework

FROM MEANWHILE USE TO TRANSITIONAL URBANISM



Meanwhile as transitional urbanism



Opportunity for meaningful meanwhile practice

Current practices around meanwhile projects involve the activation of a site for a short period of time before the site, the built infrastructure and the community created around it be left behind making way for a new development.

It is therefore important for meaningful meanwhile projects to carefully consider the long-term strategy from early inception stage, and to fully envision the site on a much longer timeframe than the actual short-term physical occupation.

There is an opportunity for meanwhile use projects to act as an incremental and meaningful step towards achieving a city-wide goal without leaving behind the community created and be seen as transitional projects that bring early wins prior to achieving a broader end goal, hence the term transitional urbanism.

The opportunity of positioning meanwhile as an incremental step will help address communities' needs in the short, and long-term, and deliver social outcomes whilst achieving broader city goals and the Mayor's priorities. As opposed to an independent action in the context of a development project.

The proposed framework conceptualises the role of meanwhile within the broader urban development practice. It positions meanwhile practice as the interface between responding to the needs of local communities and the pursuit of the Mayor's priorities and policies, and that both prepares sites for longer-term visions and projects. This positioning will be crucial in defining and agreeing the use for the property (land or building).

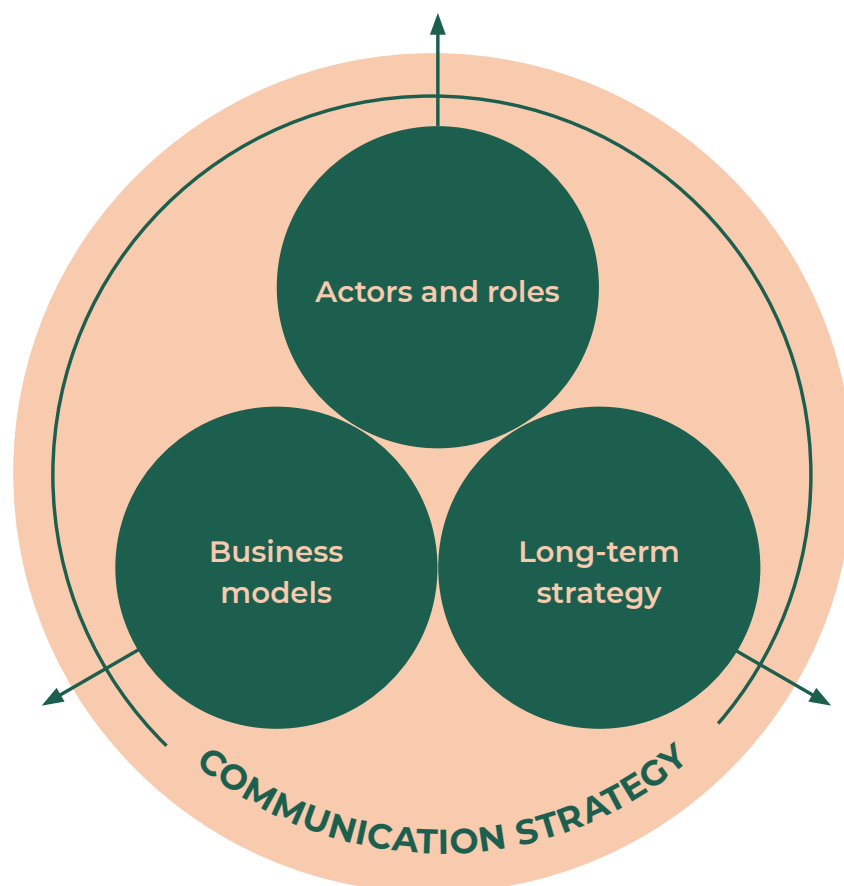
Needs are gathered from the broader market, whether local communities, civil societies, boroughs or even developers/land owners. Whilst these needs are likely to be quite diverse, a balance between all these needs is important to ensure the buy in of all actors involved in the activation process.

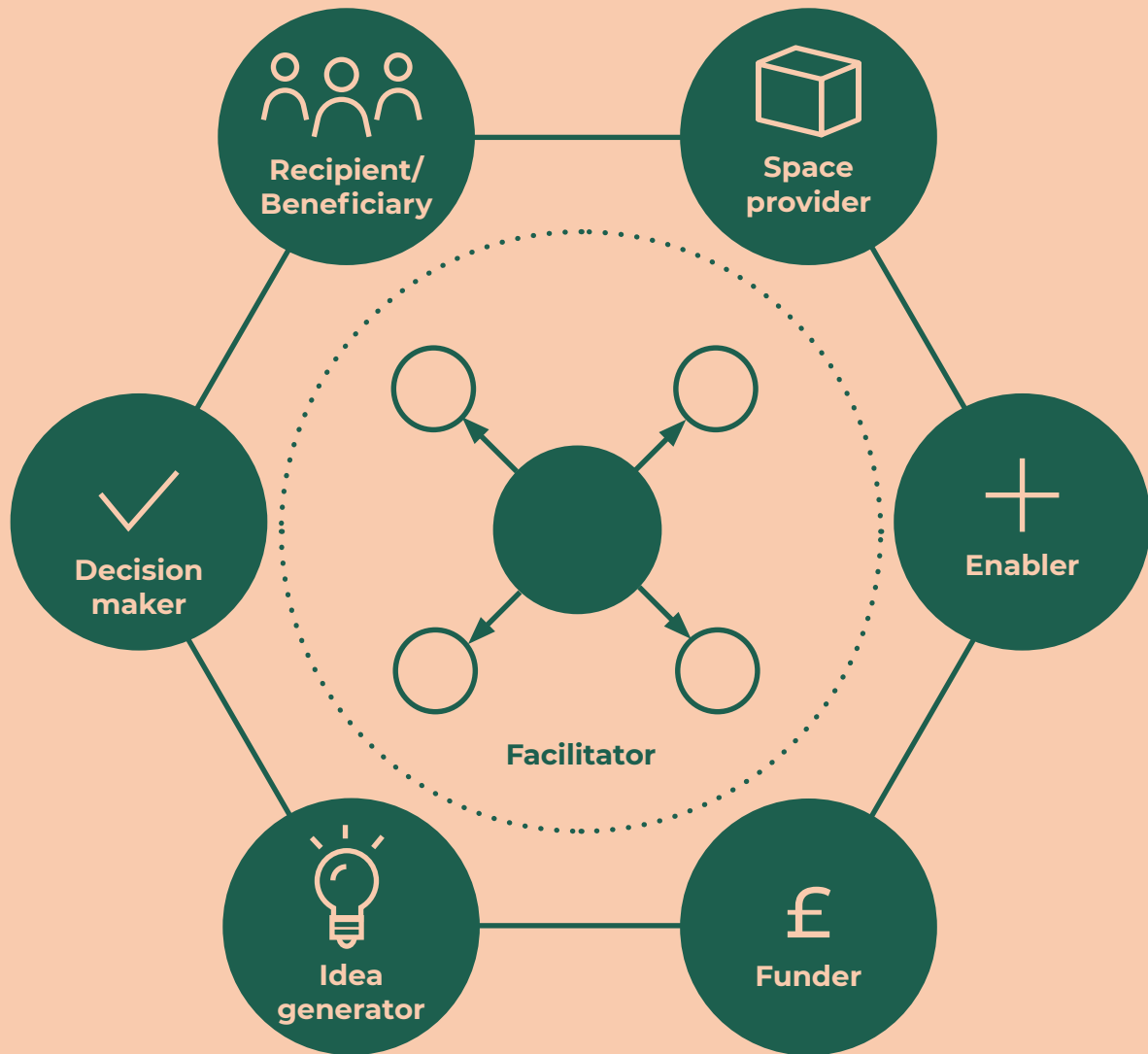
MEANWHILE USE ECOSYSTEM

The analysis from the baseline chapter and the stakeholder consultation highlighted key essential components for an inclusive, collaborative, viable and sustainable activation strategy that have been illustrated in the simple diagram below. Whilst these can vary marginally between various projects, they are broadly representative of most projects. The components are grouped under the following headings:

1. Actors and roles
2. Business models
3. Long-term strategy, and
4. Communication strategy that underpins all the above three components.

The relationship between these components will determine the property (land or building), the funds, the use and the timeframe for initiating, activating and operating.





Actors and roles

There are a number of actors involved in meanwhile projects, with one or multiple roles for each. We have identified seven key roles, with associated actors for each; three of these roles are primary entry points for initiating any project; a space provider, a funder and an idea generator.

Actors will have different interests for the project, and therefore early engagement, buy-in and alignment is important for the success of the project. We have highlighted some of the key interests in the diagram below.

Key roles and associated actors are listed below.



IDEA GENERATOR

is an actor who has an idea for the use of the space. In the context of the proposed framework, it is important that the idea for the use considers local community/civil society needs whilst pursuing a wider city objective.

Example of actors: architects, designers, developers, community members, local authorities etc.



FUNDER

is an actor who provides funding for the meanwhile project. These can be in the form of investments, grants, donations etc. to initiate, operate and maintain the project. The type of funding is associated with the scale of the activation, timeframe and the use.

Example of actors: Greater London Authority, Local Authorities, Funds (e.g. National Lottery Community Fund), development corporation (e.g. London Legacy Development Corporation), developers (e.g. Lendlease, British Land, Argent, Grosvenor, Land Securities), big corporations (e.g. Timberland), BIDs (e.g. Brixton BID, Camden Town Unlimited), charities (e.g. Trust for London).



SPACE PROVIDER

is an actor who provides the space for the project. Spaces can vary from underutilised or vacant plots, carved space from a construction site, an existing public space, a vacant building, spaces under viaducts amongst others.

Example of actors: Local authorities, developers (e.g. LendLease, British Land, Argent, Grosvenor, Land Securities), large land owners (e.g. Network Rail, Transport for London, Canal and River Trust, HS2), contractors (e.g. Bam).



DECISION MAKER

is an actor who provides the approvals required for the meanwhile projects throughout the process. Encourages and secures a social output from the meanwhile use

Example of actors: Local authorities and, in some cases, GLA.



ENABLER

is an actor who has previous experience in meanwhile projects, and who is directly involved in the initiation and activation of the project, and in many instance, its operation and maintenance. The enabler can also provide guidance on the planning and legal processes, and insurance considerations.

Example of actors: meanwhile use operators (e.g. Make Shift, Meanwhile Space CIC), charities (e.g. Core Landscapes, Global Generation, Camden Collective), architects and artists, neighbourhood association and local authorities.



RECIPIENT / BENEFICIARY

is the actor who will benefit from the social outcomes of the project.

Example of actors: local communities, civil society, local entrepreneurs / start-ups.

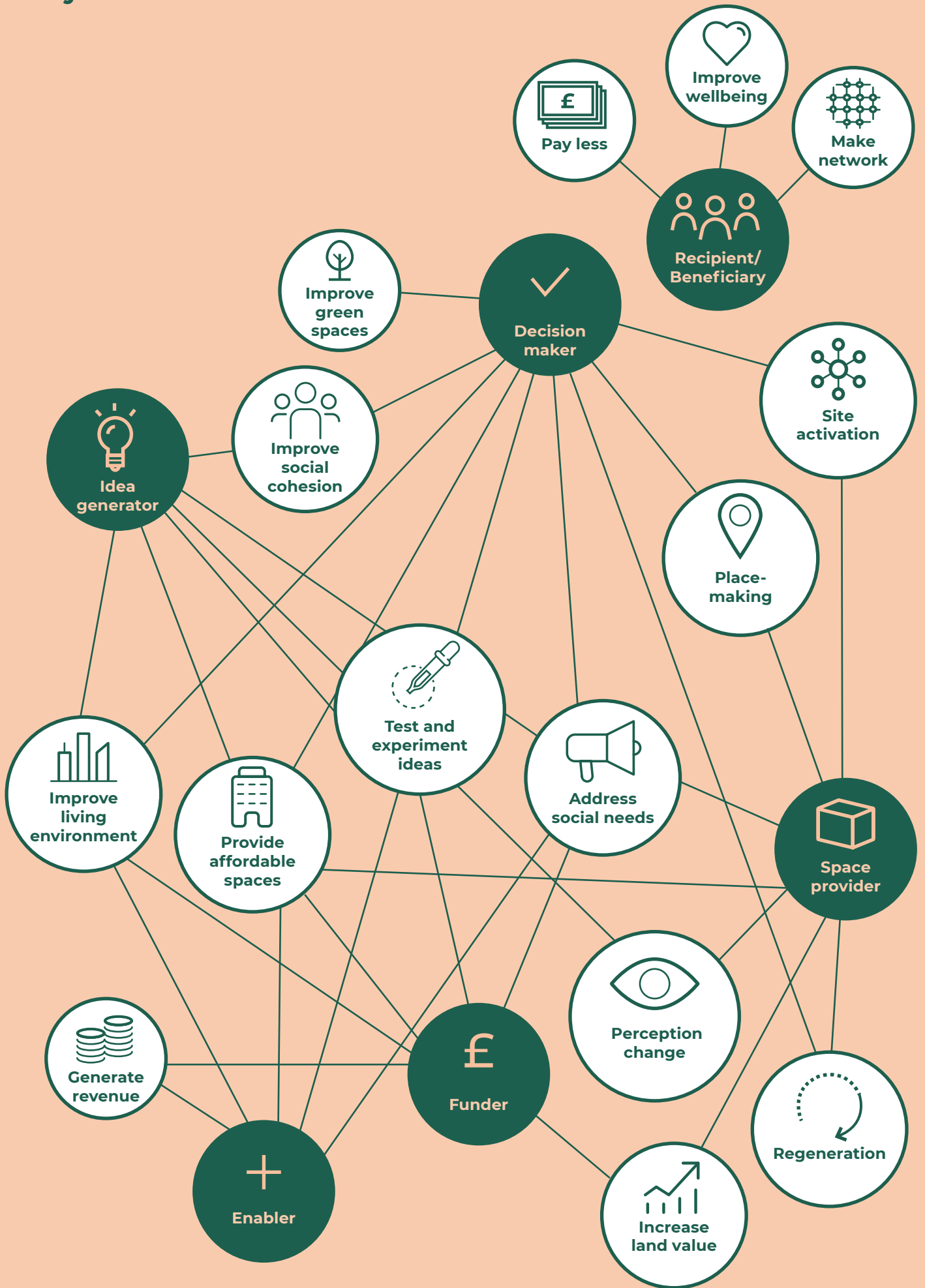


FACILITATOR

is a proposed actor who assists and provides guidance in the initiation of the project, without being directly involved in the process. The facilitator can connect the different stakeholders and actors involved. Contrary to the other roles, this role is a nice to have rather than a must have.

Example of actors: GLA, Local authorities, Consultants.

Key actors and incentives





Block Party, Pop Brixton, ©Make Shift

Business models

A key element to be considered as soon as possible in the meanwhile process in order to make it meaningful is the business model. The following section looks at the three typical business models that have emerged to sustain meanwhile urbanism in London and across other European cities.

THE GRANTS-DEPENDENT MODEL

Purpose

Social

Operating structure

Usually a registered charity or a social enterprise.

Example uses

- Community and ecological food garden built and maintained with local residents with the help from nearby universities and students including a learning centre and public spaces open to communities (e.g. Global Generation, Core Landscapes).
 - Community-led architecture and urbanism projects and community spaces (e.g. What:if Projects).
 - Affordable or emergency housing (e.g. Ladywell Housing).
 - Affordable office space for charity and civic groups (e.g. Caravanserai, South Kilburn Studios).
-

Opportunity

Generate social value and use social capital (volunteer groups, community resources) to generate low-cost activities on site.

Challenge

Generate or sustain income to cover operations and maintenance.

Business model

- Largely based on public or private grants and subsidies.
- Potential to develop revenue-generating activities alongside the social use (such as building and maintaining planters in nearby restaurants and offices on a contract basis, when the opportunity to pursue activities beyond a short-term lease arise).
- Usually rent-free occupation for the managing organisation.
- Service and maintenance charges paid by grant or the tenant.
- Business rates contribution determined in partnership with the local council and can vary depending on the period the property has been vacant for. Charities benefit from an exemption in business rates.

The operators of such meanwhile uses have seized the opportunity to use a derelict or vacant space to serve a social need at the lowest possible cost. The land or property owner of the site usually does not charge a rent to the occupier but is able to realise considerable savings by transferring the site's service and maintenance charges onto the meanwhile use operator (including business rates as applicable).

The meanwhile uses observed within this category contribute to a clear social need which would in most instances make it difficult to develop sufficient revenues to achieve financial independence.

	Costs	Benefits
Enabler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty: grants may be available only for a specific set of activities or period of time. They may also be tied to the locality and space and not be renewed in the case of a rotation. • Require significant time and effort to unlock. • Need to perform highly against grant criteria to gain potential to pursue activities in the longer run, rotate to new space or be embed into new use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operator can focus efforts on activities that contribute directly to purpose.
Beneficiary	Limited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants usually imply a social or environmental purpose is tackled. • The granting of funds to a specific meanwhile use may signal an accurate targeting of local community needs. • Local job opportunities.
Space provider / developer	Limited.	Ability to test placemaking concepts and ways to develop strong local community support and corporate social responsibility initiatives to be incorporated into future development.
Funder(s)		Opportunity to bring targeted, concrete solution rapidly and in the short-term.
Occupier(s)	Greater uncertainty at lease end (i.e. if operator does not manage to secure longer-term options).	Potential to start up activities at low cost.

THE HYBRID MODEL

Purpose

Mix of social and commercial objectives.

Operating structure

Registered charity or social enterprise.

Example uses

Provision of affordable working spaces such as offices or workshops, retail and event spaces, training centres for vulnerable communities, etc. (e.g. the Camden Collective, Dalston Curve Garden).

Opportunity

Recoup costs from low-rent or low-cost payments from occupiers, allowing organisations for which market rents normally preclude them from occupation to use the space.

Challenge

Generate or sustain income to cover operations and maintenance, and potential for commercially-oriented organisations to take the focus (crowding out social focus).

Business model

Based on a mix of commercial revenues from on-site activities, grants and subsidies.

Hybrid models develop commercial activities as a mean to address their social purpose and generate revenues that can complement grants or donations. Reducing costs through temporary leases, operators can offer services at lower-than-market prices to occupants and users that could otherwise not be served through traditional market offerings. Several operators use vacant properties to offer affordable working spaces and retail units to local entrepreneurs whose activities would not be viable on the commercial market or who could not start up their activities otherwise.

Operators of hybrid models finance part of their project through the rent charged to tenants, or through a contribution from the tenants to the service charges required to operate the building. Some examples have been developed where the operator charges a market or slightly lower-than-market rent to tenants and use this revenue to partly or fully subsidise the rent of specific groups of tenants. Those specific groups are determined by the operator according to selection criteria defined in line with their purpose and can vary from vulnerable groups to local entrepreneurs.

Whilst those operators rely on private and public grants to initiate and maintain their activities, they manage to develop a commercial model in parallel that enables them to reduce the extent to which they rely on grants. Commercial revenues are allocated for further investments while serving their social objectives.

Some uses analysed under this model are backed by third party organisations that have largely contributed to the projects' financial needs during the start-up phase and can help secure investments in the event where commercial revenues default. Here, the time dimension associated with a meanwhile use plays a central role as it gives more time to earn revenues while giving the opportunity of demonstrating financial soundness to potential donors or investors.

When the possibility to extend their activities whether through a lease extension, rotation to a new space, or by embedding into the longer-term development, meanwhile operators have a greater potential to strengthen their commercial model and decrease their reliance on grants by earning revenues for a longer period. Those uses tend to have a significant local economic impact by creating and sustaining value-creating activities and jobs.

Most of the case studies analysed in this business model category have developed more than one meanwhile use. Originally kick-started with the help of public funds and donations, the development of a successful model has enabled them to look beyond the short to medium term of their temporary lease to be able to rotate their meanwhile use onto new sites or develop completely new sites or concepts.

	Costs	Benefits
Enabler	Some degree of uncertainty associated with the grants-dependent model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to bring to market unique places which combine non-revenue-generating activities (social work, placemaking, farming, etc.) to more traditional urban experiences (events, retail, food and beverages, etc.). • Ability to deliver strong balance between social or environmental purpose which can be challenging to monetize while developing commercial activities which may also contribute to the social / environmental purpose of the meanwhile activities. • Opportunities to invest revenues back into existing or future meanwhile use, generate salaries to further and grow the impact of meanwhile activities.
Beneficiary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants usually imply a social or environmental purpose is tackled. • The granting of funds to a specific meanwhile use may signal an accurate targeting of local community needs. • Local job opportunities.
Space provider / developer		Ability to test a wide variety of potential uses to be included in future development.
Funder(s)		Grant efficiency: ability to kickstart actions that solve local challenges in a direct, local and relatively immediate way with the potential of becoming self-sufficient over the longer run.
Occupier(s)	Greater uncertainty at lease end (i.e. if operator does not manage to secure longer-term options; if commercial activities cannot support possible integration into commercial market).	Potential to start up activities at low cost.

THE COMMERCIAL MODEL

Purpose

Commercial with some social aspects.

Operating structure

Usually a registered company or social enterprise.

Example uses

Retail and food and beverage parks, event spaces, office spaces (e.g. Mercato Metropolitan, Meanwhile Space CIC, Make Shift).

Opportunity

Register as a limited company to facilitate access to loans.

Challenge

Offer certainty and assets to back up larger loans to invest and grow activities.

Business model

Financial dependence gained through commercial activities. Share of revenues shared with site owner (e.g. private developer, local council, etc.).

The third type of meanwhile use business model that has emerged in cities tends to have a strong commercial drive and demonstrate a capacity to be fully independent financially, relying mostly on private financial investments and operational revenues from commercial activities. While some examples contribute to a city's social and resilience needs, a lot of meanwhile uses within this category were developed primarily to serve market needs. Many examples in London simply occupy vacant space to develop a food and beverage offering which also includes some retail space. These uses capitalise on the relatively cheaper rent compared to market rents to develop a commercial activity that can become rapidly profitable to compensate for the short lease period. In those cases, the operator recoups its investment and generates revenues by letting retail spaces and capturing some share of their revenues.

Some meanwhile projects that have managed to achieve financial independence through commercial activities conserve a strong social purpose and aim to directly contribute to a local community's needs and objectives.

	Costs	Benefits
Enabler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially more challenging model to create close links with the local community. • Potentially higher cost of financing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier access to finance through borrowing. • Opportunity to use revenues for investments. • Demonstrate value through financial revenues. • Stronger potential to secure future meanwhile use.
Beneficiary	Commercial activities for a temporary period may distort the local community's socioeconomic environment.	Local job opportunities.
Space provider / developer	Potentially more challenging model to integrate future development into the local environment, depending on the future development's use(s).	Potential to retain commercially viable occupiers within their future development.
Funder(s)	Limited time period for financial returns, and limited certainty as per the likelihood of operator to secure new space at lease end.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced confidence (legal structure and (regular) revenues). • Return on investment.
Occupier(s)	Greater uncertainty at lease end (i.e. if operator does not manage to secure longer-term options; if commercial activities cannot support possible integration into commercial market).	Higher chances of pursuing activities with operator after lease end.

Long-term strategy

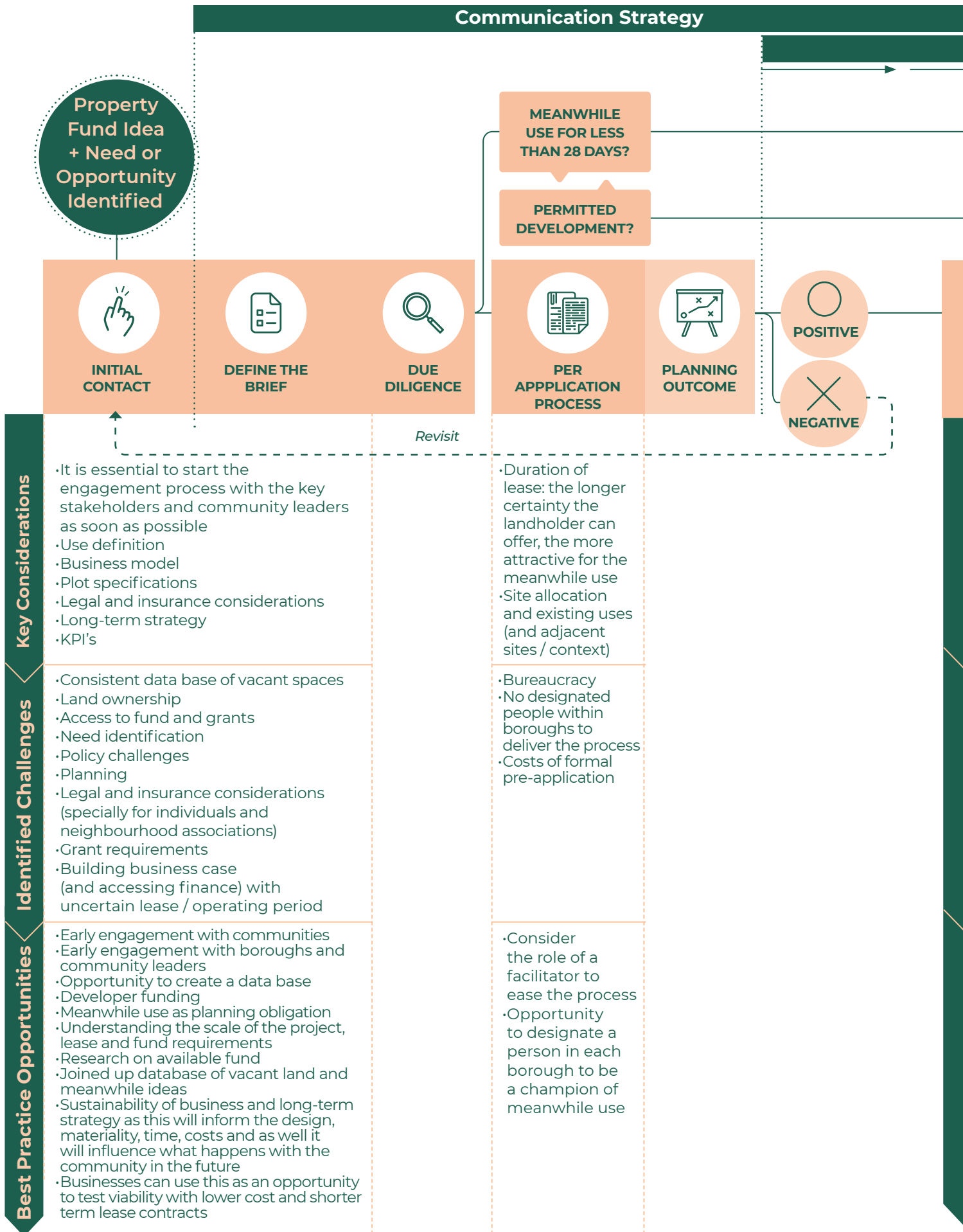
Having a long-term strategy for the future of the transitional urbanism projects has proved essential to leverage the social benefits that the project might have brought to a neighbourhood. This strategy should be considered since the beginning when engaging with the different stakeholders, defining the use and negotiating the lease terms for the land.

There are usually three scenarios that could happen once the lease period for the meanwhile use finishes:

1. the meanwhile use ends as well
2. the meanwhile use rotates to a different plot (potentially in the same area or borough to be still accessible for the initial beneficiaries)
3. the meanwhile use gets embedded in the new development in case the plot is developed.

Advocating for a social output from the meanwhile, scenarios 2 and 3 would be the preferred ones as they are the ones securing time and space. In scenario 2, the meanwhile could still be temporary but within the same area, addressing the needs of a community. In scenario 3, the meanwhile secures a permanent space becoming meaningful.

MEANWHILE USE JOURNEY GUIDANCE



Communication Strategy

Development and Refinement of the Business Model

Monitoring and Evaluation

Dismantle

Rotate

Extend

Embed

OTHER REQUIREMENTS



DESIGN PHASE



PLANNING APPLICATION PROCESS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS



CONSTRUCTION PHASE



OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE



LONG-TERM STRATEGY

- Respond to the brief / need
- Respond to/comply with planning context
- This will be reliant upon the business model; one-off use, multi-use rotating, or embedded within a development

- Licensing is important here (as needed)
- Planning and licensing aren't always joined up

- Construction methods that align with the long-term strategy (embed, rotate, end) and meet sustainability needs

- Building capacity within community
- Local community engagement
- Positive impact in the local economy
- Funding and financial health

- Evaluate KPI's, resilience and social outcomes
- Revisit business model
- Engage stakeholders in the long-term strategy

- Tight timescale
- No or limited funds
- Scale of the project

- Lack of flexibility in process
- Timescale (8 weeks) for planning determination
- Use class restrictions or definitions --may require flexibility
- Cost associated with preparation of planning documents and application fee

- Timescale
- Funds
- Scale of the project
- Infrastructure on site

- Sustainable business model (not always easy depending on use and enablers involved in the process)
- Alignment between social outputs and business model
- Access to fund / grants

- Think about a new use for the materials and waste generated by the meanwhile use
- What happens to the community and social network created around the meanwhile use
- If it rotates: find a new space and keep the same team involved
- If it gets embedded: new planning application process and access to funds

- Understand the programme and timescale of the process
- Understand allocation of funds that need to be placed on design
- Consider circular economy principles to design something that could be replicated / reused in a different place

- Opportunity to create a fast track process for meanwhile use
- Section 106 negotiations as an opportunity to secure long-term strategy for a meanwhile use
- Guidance document to facilitate meanwhile use planning process
- Opportunity to reinforce circular economy principles within planning application requirements

- Understand the programme and timescale of the process
- Consider circular economy principles
- Materiality
- Opportunities to use local construction firms and embed construction skills within community

- New ways to increase revenues or funding following proof of concept

- Obligations of wider scheme
- Make the process more flexible
- Meanwhile use network
- Revolving the use or giving the materials to local community groups

Key Considerations

Identified Challenges

Best Practice Opportunities

1 INITIAL CONTACT

This step primarily involves networking and introductions to the key people who can help you navigate the process. A good working relationship with landowners, the local authority, including the planning department and fostering partnerships with organisations or facilitators that already have a strong understanding of meanwhile use, including funding, planning and licensing requirements is key.

It is also to establish the role and scope of public engagement in the meanwhile use and engaging from the beginning to develop ideas in collaboration that respond to context and need. This will assist in later stages of design and statutory planning consultation as it builds early support and buy-on for a project. Agreeing a clear communication strategy for engagement will also help to establish a narrative and be an effective way to manage expectations and build local governance as the project evolves and, ultimately, come to an end.

Once a network has been established they can assist with building a team, testing the business case, picking a design team and developing an outline brief.

2 DEFINE THE BRIEF

When constructing the brief, think carefully about the objective, what needs does the meanwhile use have to respond to, and is this appropriate for the site and surrounding context.

It is important to explore collaboratively within your meanwhile use network how you can achieve the aspirations of the project whilst also delivering on the aspirations set out certain contexts, whether this be within the planning framework, lease agreement or funding grant requirements. Projects that explore alternatives, and aim to respond to a local need, often find it easier to identify opportunities, define a clear and generate a value, whether it be social, economic or other at the end of the project. This can assist you in conversations with the landowner, and in negotiating acceptable terms of lease and it may be helpful to work out what the requirements of your use are to assess whether the space identified is suitable in planning terms and in defining a clear concept and aims for funding applications.

3 DUE DILIGENCE

It is important to identify potential challenges early on. Providing clarity on timescales required for consultation, producing supporting application materials and determining the planning application, as well timescales to secure the lease, funding and any licences required all need to be considered at the early stages of the project. The draft London Plan states that parameters for any meanwhile use, particularly its longevity and associated obligations, should be established from the outset and agreed by all parties.

Check the existing lawful use of the land and, or property to ascertain whether the proposed temporary use a) falls within permitted development or b) requires planning permission. Where planning permission is required, it is important to consider engagement with the local planning authority to assess the degree to which the proposed meanwhile use would be acceptable. For example, what are the adjacent uses? What impacts will the use have on neighbours? Is the site within a conservation area?

If there is no clear, practical and achievable relationship between use and site, it may be best at this stage to explore another idea, choose a different site, or both.

4 PRE-APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

As with any development, it is crucial to have early engagement with the local planning authority to get support and buy-in. Pre-application discussions with the local planning authority can assist, however come with a fee.

Pre-application assessments are used to establish principles of development and understand what is likely to be approved or not, based on your initial idea or concept. This should include details, albeit high-level at this stage, of length of use, type of use, building design including mass and scale and how this may or may not relate to the long-term use of the site. If the idea for a meanwhile use is acceptable in principle, the local planning authority can advise on what documents would be required for the planning application to achieve consent.

Alternatively, if your development is not considered to be acceptable in planning terms, the local authority can advise on how to amend your design or idea to satisfy planning requirements, this may be in relation to the use, scale or duration of meanwhile use proposed. Although it is important to work within the legal framework, a good working relationship with the local planning authority can lead to some flexibility and adaptability to suite the objectives of both parties, inform the design of the scheme and lead to greater chance of the application being granted.

5 DESIGN

The design of a meanwhile use project needs to make sure the benefits derived are accessible to all, whether social, cultural, economic or environmental, and respond to the transient context of the project. Understanding the longevity of the project and funding will assist in how the design can respond to time, need and budget.

During the design phase, it is also important to consider key design aspects that respond to planning requirements, such as layout, scale, access, appearance and materiality. Design needs to consider the environmental issues of a scheme, including infrastructure aspects such as refuse, recycling, lighting and security. All planning applications require public consultation, therefore consider undertaking your own early public consultation during this phase or ensure local communities are engaged with the design. Consider the needs, demands, expectations and preferences of the local community and users of the space.

6 CHECK OTHER REQUIREMENTS & PERMISSIONS

Before agreeing on lease arrangements and signing contracts it is important to consider the time and cost implications for planning and other related expenses such as rent, business rates, licenses and insurances.

7 PLANNING APPLICATION

The planning authority will assess your proposals against planning policy, balancing community and stakeholder view against technical appraisals.

8 CONSTRUCTION

If, following a grant of planning permission, you need to make minor amendments to the application; this can be achieved by submitting a non-material amendment application. However, if any changes are material in nature and result in significant variation from the planning permission, a further planning application would be required.

9 OCCUPATION

Toward the end of a temporary period of planning permission, it is necessary to consider the next steps of the project. Once a temporary permission has come to the end, the use of the land or building will revert to its initial use, unless a new application is made. If a temporary use is to rotate to a new site or extend its period on the same site, it is crucial that any required planning applications and other licences, are submitted in sufficient time before the date of expiration of the permitted use. Otherwise the meanwhile use may be rendered unlawful and subject to enforcement.

10 LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Consideration needs to be given to a long-term strategy, whether this is providing alternative adequate space (for rotation), assisting change from a temporary to permanent use, or decommissioning the project with links to a circular economy. This will assist with the resilience of the project and help it to move on, if appropriate, or be dismantled sustainably. This would encourage planning support if in line with other policy requirements.



Peckham Levels, ©Bex Walton

06

Recommendations

OVERVIEW

This report outlines evidence on the need for change in the way we view, understand and apply meanwhile uses in London, a need to re-focus standardised practice and consider the beneficial impacts of a more formalised practice.

This section identifies a range of recommendations for the GLA that offer practical ways in which the GLA, either themselves or through partnership working, can better support the implementation (and upscaling) of meanwhile uses, and facilitate a more streamlined approach to assessing meanwhile uses within wider decision-making processes, incorporating thinking about the resilience and sustainability of our city.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Working in Partnership – an actor-network approach

Partnerships are key to delivering successful and sustainable meanwhile uses. It is recommended that the GLA works alongside local authorities, businesses, organisations, local communities and other meanwhile use actors to enhance, promote and encourage meanwhile uses, through facilitating more engagement and matchmaking.

1

Work with Borough Councils to create a **database of sites and interested parties**, to include underused / vacant buildings together with community groups and other actors expressing interest in meanwhile uses. Design these tools to work at Borough level but ensure tool architecture allows for platform to later be viewed GLA wide. Working with local practitioners and communities to identify practical and local ways of addressing need in the short-term will build resilience in the long-term. It will support a more efficient and quicker delivery of meanwhile uses. There is the opportunity to add further value to this piece of work by ensuring the sites mapped are identified as those that already have support in principle for a meanwhile use development.

2

Create a **register of actors** and organisations that can facilitate meanwhile uses in line with projects promoted by local government authorities; by sharing and clarifying knowledge of the functioning of meanwhile use initiatives. The database should also include information about lenders which understand the opportunities for meanwhile projects and are willing to work with organisations to develop loan terms which are suitable for meanwhile projects. This will assist with the advocacy of meanwhile uses and quicken the routes to engagement. A partnership should provide a forum to address common issues and encourage networking.

3

Work with local authorities to ensure every **Borough has an identified point of contact**, either provided by the GLA or at a local authority level to support the development of meanwhile spaces in the Borough. They would assist with finding the most appropriate and available sites, help with understanding what uses are required by the relevant local community and what development would be acceptable in planning policy terms.

Greater Advocacy

The advantages of meanwhile uses must be well understood by policy makers to be appropriately and effectively reflected in a range of frameworks and mechanisms, including planning and funding. There is an opportunity for the GLA to further **advocate and champion meanwhile uses** and change behaviours and principles around the advantages and disadvantages of meanwhile uses. A 'collective mindset' should be established when it comes to meanwhile use by connecting those who want to create meanwhile use with those who have the available resources or skills. Identifying ways to help empower Londoners to use scarce resources and upskill, will build resilience.

Key recommendations

4

Provision of best practice guidance

A publication akin to the Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration (Feb 2018) could be produced that sets out how meanwhile use strategies and plans should be approached, delivering principles to follow and setting aims and objectives that link to wider mayoral policy targets, such as the provision of social value and links to the circular economy, can be achieved. While this would be a GLA guidance document, reference to the guide could be incorporated into planning policy documents and would therefore be considered as material evidence when considering a planning application.

Further examples might include:

5

Celebrating best practice

The GLA could produce an annual compendium of the best examples of meanwhile space in London, perhaps run hand in hand with an awards night. Alternatively, the GLA could further collaborate and/or sponsor the work done by other organisations that already recognise and award meanwhile uses, such as the New London Architecture Awards and The Meanwhile Foundation.

6

Competitions

The wider GLA organisation (including TFL) are actively looking to exploit their land holdings for wider use. There could be an opportunity, working through or with other partners to make these sites subject to community competitions to encourage and fund ideas and applications for viable meanwhile uses.

7

Story telling

There is no shortage of creative talent in London. The GLA could think about more innovative and multi-platform ways to tell stories about the benefits of meanwhile use in London. This might include social media campaigns tying in the numerous actors already working in this area in London, but it could include exhibitions in, for example, City Hall or the Building Centre or a collaboration with the Evening Standard. This is an area of practice where it is beneficial and important to link to citizens in all communities across London as often they can be project originators. The Mayor's Design Advocates could support this activity.

Planning

In terms of wider legislative or planning policy change, there are some opportunities for reform that could assist in making the planning system more efficient for meanwhile uses in the longer-term.

8

Meanwhile Use Policy within Local Plans

There is opportunity for the GLA to encourage local authorities to include new policy and guidance around meanwhile or temporary uses and vacant sites when reviewing local plans. Local Plan reviews provide an opportunity to develop new thinking on how we can make best use of vacant land and provide a strategy for meanwhile uses. The high-level Local Plan analysis within Appendix A demonstrates that there is greater recognition of meanwhile uses and, in some cases, more direct policy uptake in more recently adopted Local Plans. If the GLA reinforced this within the London planning policy framework, it would follow suit at borough level.

9

Use of planning conditions and obligations

In addition, as part of Local Plan reviews, local authorities could be encouraged to identify within their Local Plans where impacts of development could be mitigated through section 106 agreements, where they may not otherwise be secured through a planning condition. As is the case for planning obligations, conditions should be used to make development acceptable which would otherwise be considered unacceptable. Conditions will typically apply to on-site works such as public realm improvements or issues relating to the design of development. Meanwhile uses, if not included in planning conditions, could be identified as appropriate mitigation through s106 agreements.

10

Strengthen existing policies

There is potential to enhance supporting text of existing policies to further encourage the use of meanwhile use and inform how it should be implemented. The GLA and local authorities could seek to modify the supporting text of certain policies within local plans by way of a minor modification to refer to the meanwhile use. So long as the reference made does not materially affect the policies set out in a local plan, it amounts to an 'additional modification' which can be made by a local authority, without the need for a recommendation by the Inspector or public consultation.

The promotion of meanwhile uses must consider the interrelationships with other policy areas and how these may be accommodated. For example, meanwhile uses should be considered in supporting text in relation to reinforcing circular economy principles and the use of sustainable materials as well as reinforced as a valid and integral land use within larger scale projects and the wider development process. Policies that could be strengthened by referring to meanwhile use are, for example, those related to design, placemaking, town centres, circular economy, sustainable development and regeneration.

Training and support

Work with **Boroughs to develop a suite of training and communication materials** for engaging with community groups, businesses and citizens. This is to support advocacy and learning and catalyse communities to come forward with project ideas, but it will also support business resilience for SME businesses working in the meanwhile space. Specific training and support could be developed to:

11

Provide business support linked to existing programmes, such as the LEP Growth Hub, local authority programmes and charity and community organisations. These programmes can help meanwhile businesses develop their business models and prepare for legacy. The step-up from a time-constrained, low-cost meanwhile business model to a long-term, market-rent operation will require additional skills and capital that the businesses will need to build up over the course of their operations in the meanwhile business. Understanding business' resilience challenges will inform understanding of how to improve the resilience of the city. And, utilising the GLA's community resources, such as their Workforce Integration scheme, can support more inclusive outcomes for meanwhile uses.

12

Link meanwhile businesses to community and civic opportunities. Community and civic groups have a wealth of local knowledge, and they generate social value. Linking in to groups that could train local workers into the meanwhile businesses or share business skills with local civic groups could create a virtuous cycle of engagement between business and the community. Such opportunities to support local decision-making to benefit communities and increase resilience through place and space should be explored.



Funding

13

The GLA and boroughs should **signpost existing funds and develop new funding streams** to support the positive impact of those meanwhile uses which address local socioeconomic and sustainability challenges directly. Relevant structures could include the Mayor's Fund for London, TfL's Healthy Streets for London Fund or the London Economic Action Partnership's funding and financing initiatives (including the Good Growth Fund).

14

The GLA and councils could provide **mechanisms and incentives for land and property owners** to allow meanwhile uses. Greater transparency on land ownership would lead to easier engagement with owners of vacant land for meanwhile uses. Accordingly, working with land asset registers would be a good opportunity identification mechanism. In addition, meanwhile use projects could be incorporated into the GLA's Small Sites programme for public land, which identifies public land that could be brought forward for development. Regarding property, while each site is different and there are complex reasons behind vacancies, enhanced enforcement of business rates charges for empty properties could incentivise more landlords to bring in meanwhile uses to vacant properties. This arrangement can often work out advantageously for both landlords and meanwhile occupiers—while landlords have rates paid by occupiers, rates for these spaces are often lower rateable value compared to properties let on the open market.

15

The GLA and councils could provide support, credibility and visibility to those meanwhile projects that rely partly on **participative funding and financing tools**. Crowdfunding provides operators with affordable options to access funds with the added benefit of creating a bond between a meanwhile use and its future users and neighbours, early on in the development and implementation of a project.

16

Boroughs **could** incorporate the funding of meanwhile uses into their **s106 agreements with developers or use CIL funds** to contribute to enabling early infrastructure provision for meanwhile uses that deliver community facilities. Given the role they play in informing land use and bringing spaces to their maximum value, this measure would assist in **delivering wider community benefits** and social value.

Digital tools

As the GLA advances a Smarter London, the digital transformation tools that the GLA are creating and using could be applied to support meanwhile uses and to work more effectively with London's boroughs, landowners and service providers.

17

Create a **monitoring tool**. When meanwhile uses are created, data should be collected on impacts to provide metrics for evaluation and to support future business cases. The GLA could help in understanding how to use data to calculate cultural and social value. It is important to take existing data, link it with interdependencies and apply it to practical projects and actions. Ensuring that actors take these interdependencies into account is key to building resilience.



Peckham Levels, ©Make Shift

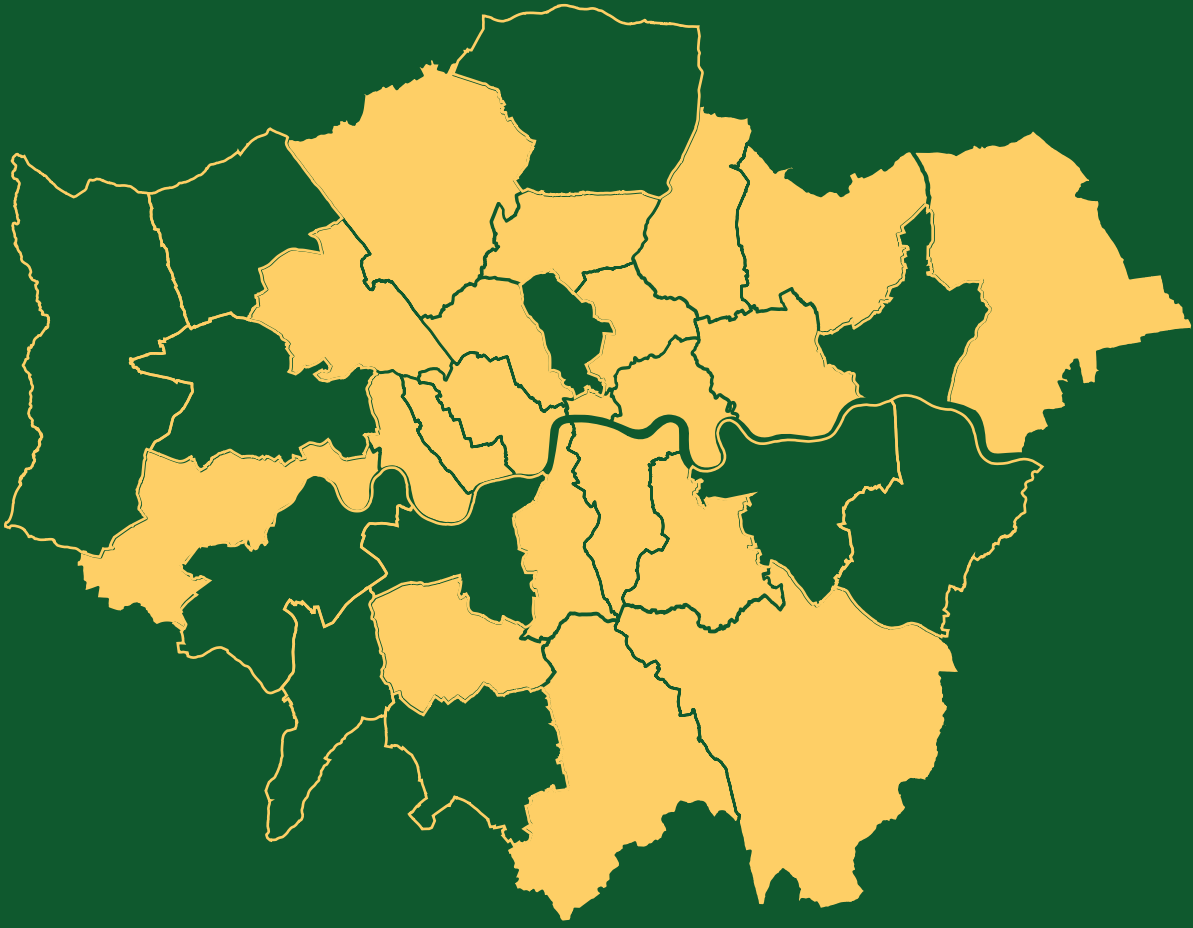
07

Conclusion

Introducing greater innovation and creativity through meanwhile use can play a key role in re-activating vacant spaces and responding to some of London's pressing issues, including addressing community needs and supporting long term community resilience. At a London scale, the GLA recognises the social, economic and environmental value of meanwhile uses but a common and definitive approach has not yet been established.

So, what does this mean in practice? There are some practical steps the GLA can take that will help to realise more meanwhile use in London, and ensure the potential benefits from these projects are realised in practice. This report provides a series of recommendations linking to each of the Mayors main powers (e.g. planning, advocacy, convening and funding). It also identifies opportunities to develop meanwhile use activities in London's economic and social recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. It is now for the GLA to further consult on and develop these recommendations and embed them for delivery across the GLA family and, where possible, with partners.

Arup believes there are significant and exciting opportunities to unlock more and better meanwhile use in London and that there needs to be a shift away from thinking about these opportunities on a site by site basis and towards the establishment and maintenance of a network of meanwhile actors and opportunities.



Appendix A

Borough	Local Plan Document	Date	Meanwhile or temporary use policies in Local Plan
Barking and Dagenham	Local Development Scheme	2019	N/A
Barnet	Core Strategy DPD	2012	Within supporting text for town centres.
Bexley	Core Strategy	2012	N/A
Brent	Local Plan (Reg 19 Submission)	2019	Within policy text for town centres (requiring all phase major developments to submit a Meanwhile Feasibility Study), in relation to Stadium Retail Park development and Wembley Masterplan, within supporting text for neighbourhood parades, night time economy, within policy text for green and blue infrastructure.
Bromley	Local Plan	2019	Policy 21 allows the temporary use of vacant buildings as community facilities.
Camden	Local Plan	2017	Reference to temporary accommodation in housing supporting text, within policy wording for cultural and leisure facilities with regard to vacant buildings, within policy wording for temporary provision of open space, including food growing areas.
City of London	Draft Local Plan 2036	2018	Policy for temporary meanwhile use of offices.
Croydon	Croydon Local Plan	2018	Within policy for employment referring to meanwhile uses within empty buildings or cleared sites contributing to regeneration.
Ealing	Core Strategy	2012	N/A
Enfield	Core Strategy	2010	N/A
Greenwich	Core Strategy	2014	N/A
Hackney	Local Plan Reg 19	2018	Within arts and culture policy in reference to temporary arts activities and new employment floorspace policy where space can be provided as part of a temporary use.
Hammersmith and Fulham	Local Plan	2018	Policy CF3 supports temporary use of vacant buildings for community uses.
Haringey	Strategic Policies DPD	2013 (alterations 2017)	N/A
	Development Management Policies	2017	Policy DM42 considers granting temporary permissions for meanwhile uses within primary and secondary shopping frontages where it can be demonstrated it will positively support retail function of town centre. Temporary use of a vacant shop will be supported while it is being marketed.

Borough	Local Plan Document	Date	Meanwhile or temporary use policies in Local Plan
Harrow	Core Strategy	2012	N/A
Havering	Proposed Submission Local Plan	2016	Policy 21 supports provision for meanwhile leases for affordable workspace Policy 15 permits temporary use of vacant commercial buildings, and cleared sites for culture and creativity if positively contribute to regeneration.
Hillingdon	Development Management Policies (with proposed modifications 2019)	2015 (2019)	N/A
Hounslow	Local Plan	2015	Policy SC10 supports proposals for temporary accommodation in appropriate locations.
Islington	Core Strategy	2011	N/A
Kensington and Chelsea	Local Plan	2019	CV6 Vision for Golborne recognises contribution of Meanwhile Gardens to public realm improvements and supports enhancements. CV10 Vision for Portobello Road supports meanwhile arts and cultural use of land under and adjacent to the Westway. Policy CF7 supports temporary and meanwhile uses of vacant buildings and sites by creative, cultural and community organisations. Policy CR3 recognises and supports temporary use of open spaces subject to no adverse impacts.
Kingston upon Thames	Local Plan (Reg 18 Submission)	2019	N/A
Lambeth	Local Plan	2015	Policy ED11 supports temporary use of vacant commercial premises, open space and public realm for performance and creative work. Policy EN2 supports temporary use of vacant or derelict land or buildings and the use of incidental open space on housing estates and other open space areas for food growing.
Lewisham	Local Plan (Submission for Consultation)	2015	N/A
London Legacy Development Corporation	Revised Local Plan (Reg 19 Submission)	2018	Policy B.3 explicitly relates to proposals for temporary interim uses. These are supported where interim uses will create vitality on vacant sites.

Borough	Local Plan Document	Date	Meanwhile or temporary use policies in Local Plan
Merton	Local Plan (Stage 2 Consultation Draft)	2018	<p>EC7.1 supports opportunities to use vacant buildings and land for flexible and temporary meanwhile uses.</p> <p>Temporary permissions may be granted for meanwhile and temporary uses of vacant shopping frontages until they are re-occupied.</p>
Newham	Local Plan	2018	<p>Policy SP1 supports meanwhile uses in development to address the borough's strategic principles and avoid inactive spaces.</p> <p>Policy SP6 supports flexible community spaces and meanwhile uses in town and local centres.</p> <p>Policy H3 supports meanwhile use housing, in particular modular housing to make use of sites and deliver temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Supporting text to Policy INF7 supports opportunities for food growing, including meanwhile uses.</p> <p>Policy INF8 promotes meanwhile uses as co-location as innovative ways of addressing constrained sites in relation for community facilities.</p> <p>Policy J1 supports deployment of temporary uses in the phasing of new permanent employment-generating floorspace.</p> <p>Policy SC1 supports the opportunity to integrate food growing in development, considering temporary uses.</p>
Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation	Revised Draft Local Plan (Reg 19 Submission)	2018	<p>Policy SP6 and SP7 support meanwhile uses to activate sites and routes to create a sense of place and a destination.</p> <p>Multiple other policies support meanwhile active uses across the phase development site as an integral part of the spatial plan. This include within town centres, at transport nodes, for employment uses, creating positive frontages, cultural and creative uses.</p> <p>Policy TCC9 explicitly relates to Meanwhile Uses. It supports proposals for such uses where they contribute to activation and character and reinforce longer-term use. All major development proposals are required to submit a Meanwhile Feasibility Study and, where applicable, a Meanwhile Strategy.</p>
Redbridge	Local Plan	2015	<p>Supporting text to Policy LP15 seeks appropriate provision for flexible and meanwhile leases for managed workspaces.</p>
Richmond upon Thames	Local Plan	2018	N/A

Borough	Local Plan Document	Date	Meanwhile or temporary use policies in Local Plan
Southwark	New Local Plan (Proposed Submission)	2017	Policy P15 supports efficient use of land and supports meanwhile uses where they deliver community benefits.
Sutton	Local Plan	2018	N/A
Tower Hamlets	Local Plan (Reg 18 Submission)	2016	<p>Development principles regarding open space encourage meanwhile uses on vacant sites.</p> <p>Policy EMP3 supports temporary employment uses to activate spaces.</p> <p>Policy CF8 recognises temporary uses can activate spaces and will assess temporary uses within town centres for cultural facilities if there is no adverse impact.</p> <p>Policy OS3 supports temporary open spaces including parks and allotments on vacant land.</p>
Waltham Forest	Draft Local Plan (Consultation)	2019	<p>Policy 42 considers temporary uses in vacant buildings.</p> <p>Policy 45 supports meanwhile cultural uses in parks and town centre locations.</p> <p>Policy 49 supports conversion of vacant commercial floorspace to flexible units for development of meanwhile uses for small business and cultural and educational activities.</p> <p>Policy 78 supporting text considers appropriate temporary uses to prevent decay or vacancy of listed buildings.</p> <p>Policy 86 supports temporary uses on vacant land for nature conservation.</p>
Wandsworth	Local Plan (Issues Document)	2018	N/A
Westminster	City Plan (Reg 19 Submission)	2019	<p>Policy 15 supports meanwhile use of empty spaces within town centres.</p> <p>Meanwhile uses are supported in opportunity Areas to encourage small businesses and prevent vacancy.</p> <p>Supporting text welcomes meanwhile uses on vacant space in advance of redevelopment proposals.</p> <p>Meanwhile uses are supported on long term estate regeneration sites.</p> <p>Provision of meanwhile uses for affordable workspaces will be supported within Opportunity Areas.</p>



Peckham Levels, ©Make Shift

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ICON CREDITS

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The content of the following case studies was taken from the credited sources but it was not possible to get a review from the different enablers / operators.

- *Caravanserai*
- *Dalston Eastern Curve Garden*
- *Meanwhile Gardens*

