

DRAFT MINUTES



Meeting: Workspace Advisory Group

Date: Wednesday 27 January 2021

Time: 2:00 – 4:00

Place: MS Teams

Agendas and minutes of the meetings of the Workspace Advise Group are published at <https://www.london.gov.uk/node/37821> (except in those cases where information may be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act). Meetings are not held in public and are only open to those invited to attend by the Chair.

Members:

Sarah Ellis (Co-Chair), Gravity Road
Simon Pitkeathley (SP) (Co-Chair and
LEAP member), Camden Town Unlimited
Alexander Woolf, Romulus
~~Alice Fung, Architecture 00~~
~~Alison Partridge (AP), Capital Enterprise~~
Charles Armstrong, The Trampery
~~Jeannette Pritchard, Ugli~~
James Sheppard, Cushman & Wakefield
John Spindler (JSP), Capital Enterprise
Michael Davis (MD), JLL
Nick Hartwright Projekt
Nichole Herbert Wood (NW), Second Floor
Olly Olsen (OO), The Office Group
~~Sara Turnbull (ST) (Workwild)~~
Shazia Mustafa (SM) Third Door

Also in attendance:

Stephen King (SK), London Councils
Siobhan Jared (SJ), TFL

GLA attendees:

Jamie Izzard (JI),
Maria Diaz Palomares (MDP),
Rachel Roe (RR),
Shumus Mattar (SM)

Co-opted members:

Jane Sartin (JSA), FlexSA
Anne Malcolm (AM), LB Hackney (Co-
opted member)

1. Apologies for Absence and Chair's announcements

- 1.1. SP welcomed members to the meeting and explained that item 5 has been removed from the agenda which has resulted in a reshuffle of the remainder of the items.
- 1.2. Apologies were received from Alison Partridge and Sara Turnbull.

2. Declarations of Interests

- 2.1. SP reminded members they need to declare any interests in any of the items set out on the agenda or any of the projects that are being delivered or discussed by the Group.
- 2.2. Vlad Bodogan in the absence of AF declared that 00 have an active interest in the High Streets tender.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

- 3.1. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved

4. Developing workspaces on TfL premises

- 4.1. SJ took Members through a presentation and started by explaining that TfL is currently looking at how it transforms as a business and a landlord. Affordable workspace forms part of that transformation. SJ explained that TfL is also bringing forward its social value metric as this would allow TfL to measure the social value that their customers contribute to London.
- 4.2. SJ explained that the work TfL is doing is founded around the insights it is gathering from customer research. SJ explained that social value and affordability is a piece of work they are working on at the moment with the affordable workspace piece making a clear definition between meanwhile and affordable workspace.
- 4.3. SJ highlighted that before Christmas TfL announced support for their small and large business partners until June 2021. The current support includes a 9 month support package, rent only focus with no billing on insurance or service charges and a focus on encouraging customers to the table with a case by case application through their surveyor.
- 4.4. SJ also highlighted that TfL has to date given £24 Million in support to their customer base and explained that it is critical for TfL to retain their customers and that they are able to thrive post the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Update on the Government's Planning for the Future White Paper & Update on the Permitted Development and the Use Classes Order

5.1. GB provided Members with an update on the recent Central Government changes and proposed future changes to the planning system in England. The update covered:

- a) New permitted development rights
- b) Use class order reform
- c) Changes to the current planning system
- d) Planning for the future (white paper)

5.2. GB explained that any shop, restaurant, office, or light industrial premises will be able to change to residential without planning permission subject to very limited prior approval criteria. Effectively the new right will apply to almost all office space in London and a significant amount of light industrial and creative workspace.

5.3. GB highlighted that at the London Assembly MQT the Mayor expressed serious concerns about the proposals and the negative impact they would have on highstreets, town centres and central London, leading to the potential eviction of countless businesses, the disruption to tens potentially hundreds of thousands of jobs, undermining London's recovery from COVID -19, driving up the rents of creative businesses and small enterprises as they seek to invest in future growth.

5.4. GB explained that the intended GLA response to the Government consultation will say that given the significant negative impacts of this proposed PDR permitted development should not be introduced, if the Government do seek to pursue it the GLA will potentially ask the Secretary of State to exercise his function to transfer existing article 4 directions which are currently in place to protect London's nationally significant office locations in Central London or alternatively that the proposals should be delayed for at least a year in order to give the Boroughs sufficient time to introduce new non immediate article 4 directions supported by more updated evidence. The GLA will also propose other mitigations including recommendations around size thresholds and some additional prior approval conditions. There are also concerns on the housing front in terms of no contributions to affordable housing and serious concerns about the design quality and the ability to optimise the development of sites.

6. Workspaces Affordability Manifesto

6.1. Harry Owen Jones and Daniel Partridge took Members through a presentation detailing the workspaces affordability manifesto.

6.2. DP explained the importance of affordable workspaces by showing an example of what it can achieve. HOJ explained that International House in Brixton is an example of an affordable space that does work and that there are three factors that contribute to this;

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- The building in council owned
- It is an existing building not a new build
- Not a product of affordable workspace policy

DP further explained that International House operates on a buy give work model where space is given away rent free when space is paid for on commercial terms. The cross subsidy supports the type of activity and individuals that are at risk of displacement and also provides jobs and apprenticeships and opportunities to local residents and businesses.

6.3. HOJ explained that as International House is council owned Lambeth has a much greater say in shaping the building outputs and the tenant make up. They can also use the building as a tool to curate the local economy and deliver social value. In this instance International House is being used as a market maker to introduce more creative and digital industry companies.

6.4. HOJ took members through a presentation slide highlighting key social value outputs achieved in 2019 some of which are;

- 230 new jobs
- 337 people employed
- 130 businesses given access to space

6.5. HOJ explained that as it stands affordable workspace policy doesn't focus on provision of affordable workspace in council owned assets like International House and instead seeks to provide affordable workspace in new commercial schemes. DP also explained that the current affordable workspace policy doesn't work largely as:

- Affordable is a loaded but ill defined term
- Planning policy and S106 are blunt instruments used variably
- Market failures in the link between spaces and end users
- Need for more varied intermediaries
- Challenge in reconciling "best value" and "public value"

HOJ explained that they are keen to see this change and for a broad coalition of Local Authorities, operators and developers to challenge current delivery methods and advocate for an alternative system that is genuinely affordable, greener and more resilient.

6.6. HOJ highlighted that spaces for enterprise and amenity will be needed more than ever post COVID to deliver a fair and inclusive recovery. Additionally, a new focus on local and a diversity of uses is essential to the renaissance of neighbourhoods, high streets and town centres.

6.7. DP took members through the four opportunities to act which are at the heart of the workspaces manifesto;

1. Fix broken affordable workspace policies and bridge the affordability gap;

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2. Make a better case to act that is based on new principles and is supported across partners and sectors
3. Empower Local Authorities to take back control of their cities
4. Explore and nurture new delivery models to tackle market failure

6.8. Members discussed the presentation and posed a number of questions to DP and HOJ including the cost of old buildings, the landlords charter as well as the potential for developers to be involved in the process.

7. Meanwhile Space

7.1. JR took Members through a presentation relating to the Meanwhile Space project which is one of the 21 actions that are part of the City of London Resilience Strategy.

7.2. JR explained that there has been an increase in Meanwhile Use activity across London and the overarching project objective is to explain how meanwhile use activities can be designed and delivered in a way that maximises social value and benefits to local communities and ensures these benefits are long lasting.

7.3. JR explained that the first step has been to commission a piece of research to ARUP which was published in November 2020 and took Members through some of the highlights of the report:

- Literature and policy review including examining the meanwhile use definition as well as providing narrative on how meanwhile use can be used to address resilience and good growth objectives
- Stakeholder consultation and 11 case studies
- A framework for developing meanwhile use activities including business models, opportunities and challenges and processes to design, activate and deliver meanwhile use
- Policy recommendations

7.4. Members welcomed the research with CA highlighting that over the next 5 years there will be a very specific role for meanwhile space in London given that there are many empty and unoccupied spaces coupled with an enormous wave of cultural and creative businesses which create a natural fit for the two. CA suggested that the GLA or another intermediary organisation could play a role in creating a templated approach or mechanism that gives an operator or a landowner a way to operate that would streamline the process. CA explained that anything that can take friction out of the process and help the landowner, operator and Local Authority to triangulate, see an opportunity and move obstacles from it is going to be worthwhile.

8. Updates on the WAG Action Plan

- 8.1. JI updated Members on the **Accreditation Project** and reiterated the issues the GLA has in terms of continuing the project beyond the pilot phase in particular relating to funding and explained that the GLA is currently looking at how best to use the learnings from the pilot to support workspaces and boroughs. JI explained that the GLA is now in the process of commissioning a small piece of work to produce a toolkit that can be published and used by workspaces and boroughs.
- 8.2. MDP updated Members on the **Co-ordination of the Sector** and explained that an invitation to quote for the **survey of the workspaces sector** has been finalised and is currently out for tender with a deadline of 5 February.
- 8.3. MDP also updated Members on the flexible workspaces definitions and asked Members to submit their comments on the document before it is published.
- 8.4. MDP updated Members on the Creation of Science & Lab workspaces and explained that an action plan has been shared with Members which was a result of the roundtable hosted in September 2020 and invited members to submit comments which can be addressed at the next WAG meeting.
- 8.5. VB provided Members with an update on the Highstreets project and explained that they are expecting to finalise the pamphlet by the mid -February and that a more detailed presentation will take place on 2 February which is open to all Members.
- 8.6. AW updated Members on **Move on Space** explained that the desired outcome of the research is to understand the barriers facing scale –ups and SMEs in taking workspace however beforehand a definition of Move on Space is required.
- 8.7. AW explained that the research objectives are to explore the needs of companies and their employees, explore the pain points in their existing workspaces and test some new opportunity areas or concepts.
- 8.8. AW stated that the aim is to link this research to the High Streets research and the meeting with the landowners/developers.

9. Any Other Business

None

10. Dates of Future meetings

Wednesday 24 March 2021