



Courtesy: Robin Hutchinson

Living Local – Where Next?

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- **Ipsos Mori have found that 44% of Britons think that cities will become less attractive places to live in the next few years.** People want to be near to local ties rather than a key transport hub, moving out of the 'centre' to the edges and beyond, with space to work from home the top priority. Have we reached a tipping point, where people are turning against city centres? If so we need to understand why.
- **People are looking for more space, deeper roots in their community and more connection to nature** – things they may lack in more built-up environments. During lockdown, people adapted their homes in many ways and would have adapted their neighbourhoods if they had the chance - are there limits to density and height?
- **But how much choice do people have?** Where they can choose they are moving, but this may be the tip of the iceberg, with others' choices heavily constrained by the market. We need to identify and remove barriers so that people want to stay in an area.
- **The missing ingredients can be provided in urban contexts, if they provide great places that include the green infrastructure, human scale services, good community connections and more private space both inside and outside homes.** However, achieving this is a huge challenge, needing collaboration, shared goals and adapting current funding and policy levers to create the right conditions. The current affordable housing delivery model is flawed, and it is a huge challenge to adapting existing designs to increase space, due to pressure on viability.
- **By increasing the places which we share together, we can improve the efficiency of space as well as make stronger places which are more sustainable.** This involves thinking outside the 'red line' site boundary and having a common language, developing management models to work for shared spaces.
- **Living local means less trips on transport but if walkable, liveable, joined up places are not provided, car use and dominance can increase.** TfL are focussing on supporting active travel, particularly in outer areas. Slower ways to travel such as walking routes can be attractive by providing more of a '3D experience', catering for all of the senses. We can also look at how to strengthen the links between homes, shared and open spaces, reducing the barriers and the time needed to reach them. And public space is essential, not just a 'nice to have'.



- **Co-design ensures people's desire for local living affects a range of areas including infrastructure, local meeting places, town centres and green spaces.** We need good local community spaces which are neutral, well used, enjoyable and fun! Stations are community 'bump' places - hubs for local activities and commerce - not just for getting somewhere else. Can uses such as stations power the post-covid economy?
- **The GLA have a range of initiatives to support the move to local living.** High streets are a key focus, bringing together the ability to provide a rich experience, connection, walkability, inclusivity and opportunities for sharing. It is hoped there will be an exemplar in every borough. Leisure provision can link across to these wider objectives, and we can use leisure to drive local living.
- **There are some great examples of local authorities experimenting to increase focus on the local.** Tower Hamlets have developed approaches to improve quality of life and the neighbourhood through policies and planning. The design of Meridian Water in Enfield is responding to the local living trend by improving access to open space, ideally to provide this within a 2 minute walk for all residents. The scheme is also looking to provide more work-friendly home layouts and space for flexible shared spaces at the ground floor.
- **Southwark is understanding it's broader area as having a 'greener belt' which can connect local communities together, and is providing neutral and attractive council-supported places to go.** The Choose Local Support Everyone campaign in Waltham Forest has been really successful – helping people to live more holistically in their local area.
- **'Local' isn't just a place, it's the local population that makes a place.** Everybody can be brilliant if they are given the help and support. It's about giving people choices and the ability to act. The real asset is the people and the social 'soil' they create in a community is unique and will result in different outcomes in each locality. Places should be more local, mutual, equitable and sustainable.

Speakers:

Attendees: 81

Michael Clemence - Ipsos Mori
Nicola Bacon - Social Life
Hannah Groot - Transport for London
Emily Williams - Savills
Jamie Dean - GLA
Emma Griffin - Footways
Ian Brooker - Jacobs
Chris Douglas - WSP

Becky Johnson - Transport for London
Robin Hutchinson - The Community Brain
Nick Evans - Sport England
Aymara Lamche-Brennan - Charlton Brown Architects
Sripriya Sudhakar - LB Tower Hamlets
Colin Wilson - LB Southwark
Lisa Woo - LB Enfield
Cllr Simon Miller - LB Waltham Forest