

## 1 Effective youth engagement is directly connected to citizen education

Young Londoners are acutely aware of changes occurring in their neighbourhoods, but currently have limited knowledge or understanding of the planning processes and proposals at play. To address this, engagement methods and materials must be relevant to the everyday realities of young people.

## 2 Effective youth engagement happens on home turf

Young Londoners are best engaged in spaces that are relevant to their day-to-day lives. Retaining and reviving youth-orientated facilities is therefore key to enhancing youth participation.

## 3 Effective youth engagement encourages contributions in an array of forms

Youth engagement approaches must create flexible, inviting spaces that give equal weight to a wide variety of contributions from different groups of young people.

## 4 Effective youth engagement is strengthened by short-term outcomes

Young people currently lack trust in formal decision making processes and often feel victimised by regeneration outcomes. To rebuild trust, young people must see their opinions converted into actions in the short-term.

## 5 Effective youth engagement works with, not around, community based organisations

Young people are best engaged through projects / organisations that already offer them support and which have established a relationship of trust. These organisations require political and financial support to consolidate and extend their capacity for youth engagement.

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The full report is available to download from the DPU website: [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/development/sites/bartlett/files/udp\\_report\\_2017\\_2.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/development/sites/bartlett/files/udp_report_2017_2.pdf)



# Youth Engagement in London Planning

A collaboration between **MSc Urban Development Planning (UDP)**, the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London (UCL) and the **Just Space Network**



# Seizing an Opportunity for Change

For those working for socially and environmentally just cities, the exclusion of young people from formal planning is of profound concern. This exclusion takes multiple forms, and relates as much to a marginalisation of young people from formal planning processes, as to their self exclusion from procedures that too often seem impenetrable, and which they do not trust.

In recent years, funding cuts to youth services and youth organisations have further damaged the already tenuous relationship between the government and young people, leaving their diverse needs and aspirations largely unheard and unaddressed by the planning process.

However, the election of Sadiq Khan as Mayor of London creates an opportunity to do some things differently. The GLA have committed to reviewing their approach to community engagement in advance of preparing a new London Plan - a City for all Londoners. In principle, this opens up space for groups previously under-represented within the planning process to make their voices heard.

*“[Young people] will shape the future, so it’s important that we unlock the potential of the next generation.”*

**Sadiq Khan, London Mayor**

From a community planning perspective, it is essential that the GLA move beyond token consultation, and instead develop flexible engagement strategies to enable all citizens, regardless of age, class, gender, ethnicity, race, religion or sexuality, to join in co-creating London’s urban future. To achieve this goal, the GLA should look to the rich experiences of civil society groups in the capital.

This work focuses explicitly on youth engagement in London planning, drawing on research conducted by MSc UDP students at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London (UCL), in collaboration with Just Space, Grove Park Neighbourhood Forum, PemPeople and Take Back the City.

# Learning from Young Londoners

## Grove Park Neighbourhood Forum

Working with Grove Park Neighbourhood Forum highlighted the challenge of locating youth voices in areas where cuts have shutdown many of the spaces available for youth activities. Neighbourhood Forums have an opportunity to help (re)create representative youth groups at the local level, but they will need support to develop meaningful engagement methods and essential safeguarding procedures for working with young people.



## PemPeople

Research conducted with PemPeople highlighted how young residents in Southwark currently perceive themselves as victims of regeneration, rather than its beneficiaries. Transformed into strangers in their own streets, the affective displacement of local communities has drastically undermined confidence in local government. To rebuild this trust, local authorities should reach out to civil society organisations such as PemPeople and explore measures to revive youth engagement.

## Take Back the City

From impromptu debates on buses to poetry recitals in corner shops, Take Back the City deliver unique and appealing community engagement methods that highlight the eagerness of young people to engage politically in spaces, practices and languages that are relevant to their everyday experience of life in London. Rallying against the inflexible and opaque consultation approaches favoured by many London Authorities, Take Back the City encourage Londoners of all ages to express their politics in whatever form they are most comfortable with. This empowering approach offers a possible route to (re)energise youth engagement across the capital.

