



Courtesy: Mellis Howard, Archio Architects

Housing and Communities

19/01/2022

- **‘Community’ is a loaded word - we all think we know what it means!** It can be helpful to explain what this and other terms mean in relation to your work, to improve communication and understanding.
- **Communities are able to be involved in the shaping of their area when they have genuine power in the decision-making process.** And they are able to stay involved as a whole community when they have security of tenure/ residency. We need to get the basics of engagement right.
- **Start at the beginning, before the ‘red line’ boundary is even drawn. When approaching engagement, work to ensure people feel this is for them - creating spaces and conversations where people are welcome.** Be prepared to be challenged and become a good listener. Relating to people and having local knowledge, as well as having activities and spaces which provide common ground really help to build relationships.
- **On a scale from consultation through engagement to co-design, we need to be at the engagement and co-design end.** An essential for success is having a supportive local authority with political support from the top. And when you work with the private sector, be confident to use publicity to compare performance, to encourage players to do better.
- **It can be hard to know where to target scarce funding and staff resource in working with the community.** Look at where you can have the greatest effect. Don’t be afraid to use low-cost, low-tech methods to stretch resources further. You can also use the opportunity to provide employment, meeting other objectives along the way, and use the community itself to reach even more people.
- **Long term work with the community enables people to become a trusted, ‘go to’ resource.** Changes made are better able to solve the problems people face when we let the community lead. People want to influence change – but we need to give them the permission to do it.
- **Evidencing the value of working with communities should be focussed on finding evidence of the end outcomes.** Focus on people’s sense of safety, of belonging, of security and of their desire to stay.
- **Communities can be and stay involved if they can stay in their area.** If policy actively enables it; if there is genuine will to listen and to support involvement - and if there are transparent, inclusive structures to support equitable, collaborative involvement.



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Speakers:

Daisy Froud, Faculty of the Built Environment, UCL

Sam Holgate, Founder & Director, Filigree

Deborah Efemini, Project Manager of Regeneration and Place, LB Lewisham

Laura Alvarez, Senior Principal Urban Design and Conservation Officer, Nottingham City Council

Matthew Morgan, Director, Quality of Life Foundation

Mellis Haward, Director, Archio Architects

Matt Bell, Strategic Communications Director, Heatherwick Studio

Clare Richards, Architect & Founder, ftwork

Attendees: 85