

## Anchor Assets Objectives

London's Universities and TFL have holdings in every borough – some of these are vacant and bring with them a risk of vandalism and associated security costs. TFL wants to explore community use of archways present throughout the city. Productive uses of these underutilised properties would avoid the degradation of spaces but also support constructive and attractive uses that would be welcomed by the wider community – and bring reputational benefits. Councils meanwhile have access to organisations such as arts, service groups and community entities that are priced out of commercial lettings. London Higher has access to student groups who can provide skills to get properties running and host numerous accelerators whose start-up organisations could benefit from closer access to communities. The chance to match up these groups and spaces could bring vibrancy to localities as well as mutual aid, support skills grow and offer employment opportunities. This working group is looking at the possibility to match these groups and spaces for mutual benefit.

Place for London is the property arm of TFL and they have been working to develop a database of their property which contain information on their location, condition and suitability for different activities. We are looking to answer the following questions. What would be needed to help match up organisations with local authority contacts for community benefit? Would it be possible to design a process or pathway which makes this more feasible and successful across different areas of London? How can we put this into action?

### Opportunities

- Meanwhile Leases which have been around since 2013 facilitate the short-term use of empty shops and businesses to get assets quickly into use.
- While these uses maybe temporary in nature, characteristics of flexibility, affordability and efficiency allow for immediate opportunities to test out new projects and provide employment which can lead to long term benefits (NLA, 2020)
- Local businesses and organisations taking advantage of assets such as railway arches, which are also often small, locally focused and flexible, can support placemaking (GLA & ARUP, 2020).
- Locally owned and socially minded enterprises are more likely to employ, buy and invest locally (McInroy, 2018). Incorporating small community-focused local businesses facilitates a more sustainable and equitable model, helping to build community wealth (Diamond et al. 2018; McInroy, 2018).
- Priority can given to Community Businesses can provide greater social value. Community businesses are broadly defined by Power to Change as those which are locally rooted, trading for the benefit of the locally community, locally accountable and provide broad community impact (Diamond et al., 2018). These locally rooted businesses are likely to be best located by local authorities where they may previously have accessed networks, advice, businesses support or grants through local authorities.
- Far reaching benefits for community wellbeing, health and prosperity can be supported by space to help local businesses flourish and for communities to design and deliver services that meet their needs (Paddock and Partridge, 2021).
- Assets used for public use or being amendable to change through their nature can also support community resilience (Carmona and Wunderlich, 2013; GLA, 2020). Spaces that support community networks are also critical for economic stability in the long term and resilience (Paddock and Partridge, 2021).

### Challenges

- The burden of business rates and significant transaction costs combined with temporary tenancies could limit the opportunities for private operators, especially if in competition with large companies or chains (GLA, 2018).
- Uncertainty of outcomes from smaller flexible tenancies, many intangible benefits and difficulty of measuring value may create barriers to successful funding for tenants (Edgar and Gregory, 2013).
- A risk of opposition when projects are developed without sufficient community engagement, suggests a need to consider the locality and impacts on place when customising pathways for organisations into obtaining space (Scafe-Smith, 2019).
- S123 of the Local Government Act requiring authorities to get the best possible price when selling off public assets.

#### Objective Workshop 1: Nature of the barriers and how we tackle them

- Scene Setting from Caroline and Kate
- TFL: Progress of the platform – features and possibilities
- Interests and Motivations: Which groups would TFL most like to host? Which groups would councils most like to use the spaces? Any suitable criteria.
- User Profiles: Councils to provide some example users and their requirements
- User Journeys: What can councils and TFL provide through their networks and services? What are the challenges of matching? How can council's access the platform and or/how can they match tenants?
- NEXT Steps: Who should be in the room for workshop 2? What are the main objectives of the session? What information is needed prior to this?.

#### Objective Workshop 2: Vision for Potential Uses

- What are the requirements for tenants?
- How can any barriers to community use be overcome?
- How will pathways be adapted to different boroughs and spaces?
- NEXT Steps: What will be the output of the project? What are the main objectives for uses? How can we incorporate communities into the process?

#### Objective Workshop 3: What are the best way to make this happen?

- Synthesise key findings from the last session.
- Work on the output guidance.

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[HM - Example Work - Meanwhile Activity London.pdf](#)

Economic Democracy Paper [wp213\\_06.pdf \(ucl.ac.uk\)](#)