

History of JustSpace.org.uk

- Challenge of new London Government 2000 & new plans
- Neo-liberal hegemony over London government and planning – challenge for citizens
- Universities increasingly business-oriented
- But a long history of university students and staff challenging developments since 1960s
- Citizen groups form a new network: Just Space 2007
- In UCL ‘Public Engagement’ a great help: moral support, legitimacy + grants



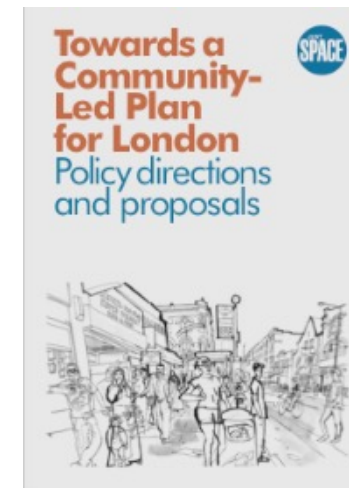
Update on campaigns

Posted on 25/09/2019 by Ed

Just Space is active on many fronts and this post is a catch-up.

Just Space has...

- In 14 years Just Space has
 - Supported hundreds of groups in participating in planning at all levels
 - Greater London
 - Boroughs & Mayoral Development Corporations (Olympics and Old Oak)
 - Neighbourhoods
- Generated a complete ‘Community-led’ alternative plan for London 2016
- Challenged every London Plan in public hearings, with 83 groups appearing in the 2019 EiP
- **For UCL**
 - Involved dozens of students each year + run a community-led Masters module joint between Bartlett Planning & UCL Geography
 - Now engaged 12 or so UCL staff in 3 Bartlett departments + in Geography
 - With Prof Sarah Bell generated the UCL Engineering Exchange & now the **Just Collaborate!** Project which extends this approach across London universities.
 - Steady stream of research publications, dissertations.



UCL/JS “Protocol” on university (staff and student) collaboration with activist groups

- Provides advice to both sides
- Outlines potentials
 - Better grounding of research & learning
 - Putting academy at service of whole society
- Warns of hazards
 - Language
 - Imposition of academic/theoretical concepts
 - Appropriation of community knowledge
 - Failing to hand results to community collaborators
 - Different deadline / rhythms

at JustSpace.org.uk & used internationally

Recovery Plan 2022 - content

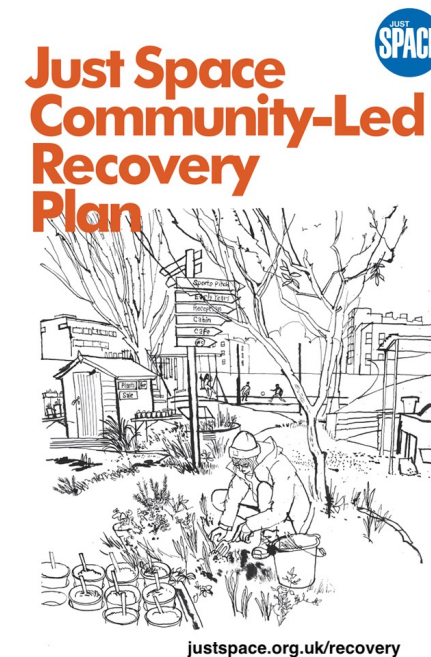
The Main Imperatives

This document ranges widely from the personal to the collective, from the neighbourhood to the city-wide. Despite coming from diverse positions, it's that range which gives authenticity to the document and converges on a number of strong demands, which will be evident as you read:

A Caring City We first focus on the Care economy, a sector which is under-paid and under-recognised but which contributes to and serves the wellbeing of the population. London must become a 'caring city' that takes care of people and nature, the spaces and places they occupy. This overarching concept embraces the overlapping themes of fairness and solidarity, co-production and co-operation, recognition and influence, resourcing, lifetime neighbourhoods, community hubs.

Visibility & Influence For All Coinciding with the Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in Minnesota, the pandemic served to raise consciousness of systemic inequalities and the value of activism. We see this context as a link to the founding principles of Just Space, about justice in the planning of the city.

Many of the proposals are aimed at resourcing more diverse and bottom-up structures, so that community organisations can take part in genuinely democratic and participatory decision-making and become agents of change.



A City Of Local Neighbourhoods Many of our workshop discussions converged on aspects of the ‘local’—the disadvantage of living in a badly-served locality, the pleasures of local places instead of making long journeys, the importance of having the people you care for living nearby.

The local neighbourhood is also the scale at which a lot of self-help and mutual solidarity activities flourish and at which many valuable social interactions could take place. The pandemic experiences add meaning and urgency to our calls for a strong Lifetime Neighbourhood approach across London.

Priority For Climate And Nature The other important thread in these proposals is the urgency of the environmental crisis—not only climate change but our whole relationship with nature, buildings, food, transport.

A crucial issue in transforming the environment is ‘just transition’. Often policies which are introduced to meet an emergency have unintended consequences which hit working class people hardest. Decarbonisation of transport and of heating systems to achieve zero carbon housing are examples where we confront this issue.

Caring City

- **POLICY 1 Responses to the Climate Emergency can bring a care economy, a circular economy and the Green New Deal together. Social care jobs are low-carbon jobs and can contribute to the green economy. This can all be described as a care-led recovery.**
- **“We should avoid ghettoing care in the caring sector and instead define care as the prime mode of the economy. If work cannot be defined as caring work, then why is it defined as valuable? What is care work? The Lucas workers decided to produce something socially useful, which we see as being about care.”**
- **MICHAEL REINSBOROUGH, NEW LUCAS PLAN**

2. Widen the social care movement by building partnerships and alliances between anchor institutions (such as universities, Local Authorities, healthcare centres) and local community organisations using the approach of community wealth building.

Neighbourhood plans could play a useful role, if they deal not just with the built environment but with the care economy.

3. Implement place-based community wealth building by creating ‘care hubs’ on the high street, where a whole range of care services are organised in an integrated way within the locality. These should be seen as a part of social infrastructure, acting as a place for unpaid carers and residential care workers to go to for support.

4. Introduce a system of social licensing for all care providers, to create a workforce model that challenges gender stereotyping and requires a real Living Wage for all care workers, driving down zero hours contracts and enforcing appropriate forms of continuous training (called Skills for Care) with significant resources allocated.



“We’re arguing you don’t just need a funding solution, which is what the government’s talking about, but we actually need a complete overhaul of the system, with local publicly accountable care provision, a national care service.”

SUSAN HIMMELWEIT, WOMEN’S BUDGET GROUP

“I like the policy on care hubs and communities and connecting this with the high streets for all challenge, which funds local partnerships to facilitate recovery, would be a really good idea.”

ANDREJ MECAVA, COMMUNITY PLAN 4 HOLLOWAY

Nature and climate emergency

28 To achieve a positive gain in biodiversity:

- Habitats need to be properly protected in their own right and must not be traded as part of a system of off-sets in planning applications.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies should be allocated to biodiversity recognising it as an essential part of infrastructure.
- Promote ecological corridors (routes for nature) so that species are able to move around.
- Encourage varied planting—flower meadows, hedgerows, fruit trees, nut trees and orchards—in the Council parks, green space and street management policies.
- Eliminate the use of chemical pesticides and herbicides.

“A lot of green spaces we have now are poorly maintained and in low quality. There is a need for proper ongoing management of streetscapes, parks and green spaces based on sensitive biodiverse practices and renewal investment in the skills and practices this involves, rather than harmful quick fixes such as dependence on pesticides and herbicides.”

PAUL DE ZYLVA, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

“I was on the biodiversity action group for Kingston in 1998. We had another one in 2006 and again in 2015. But we’ve never enacted a Biodiversity Action Plan. All the recommendations on priority habitats should’ve been implemented but Kingston has never done that. So every time we have a planning application, there’s biodiversity loss.”

ALISON FURE, ECOLOGIST / CAMPAIGNER KINGSTON

“I think the key is to connect everyone who is concerned about the green space issues together. People are desperate to engage in practical ways to solve the problems. I think there are many things that we can do from the bottom-up level.”

SARAH VAUGHAN, TREES FOR BERMONDSEY

29 Implement a Biodiversity Review Panel in each Local Authority to facilitate knowledge- sharing and to support dedicated Ecology Officers. It should bring together active citizens and specialists to:

- Oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Biodiversity Action Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Identify locations for ecological corridors
- Award grants to a citizen science programme of monitoring through audio and photographic equipment.
- Share knowledge about what resources are available and make connections.

30 For practical, immediate campaigning, encourage Natural Capital Accounting as an evidence base and important policy instrument, to assess impact and claim compensation for planning and biodiversity decision-making, to protect and increase the amount of green space in the Borough or local neighbourhood.

“What is the governance structure which allows local communities to properly engage, because they are an under-utilised resource? Whether it is explicit localism or whether it is finding a mechanism for the groups to be the go-to place for auditing green spaces, bringing people to account, a formal structure with some control.”

PETER TREADGOLD, EALING MATTERS / EALING FORGOTTEN SPACES

31 Campaign to reduce inequalities in access to green space as raised by Public Health England in their report Improving Access to Green Space by:

- **Ensuring all London Boroughs rigorously enforce the London Plan open space access/ deficiency criteria.**
- **Use the ONS data assembled by Friends of the Earth on gardens and public green space to target those London Boroughs that rank as the most deprived Local Authority areas in the UK for access to green space.**

“A key demand is that green space should have the range of quality, well-managed facilities serving all sections of the community, e.g. play and youth facilities, cafes and toilets, onsite staffing and staff depots, sports facilities, community-managed buildings and centres.”

DAVE MORRIS, LONDON FRIENDS OF GREEN SPACES NETWORK



32 Community Groups should sign the Charter for Parks and call for the Mayor of London, the GLA and the London Green Spaces Commission to also sign the Charter for Parks.

The Charter for Parks sets out to:

Celebrate the central role well-run parks play in our neighbourhoods for all sections of our communities. Recognise the right of every citizen to have access within walking distance to a good quality public green space. Endorse a legal duty for all public green space to be managed to a good standard. Embed effective protection from inappropriate development or use, or loss of any part of our parks.

Ensure adequate long-term resources for ongoing maintenance, management, and improvements.

Encourage and enable community involvement and empowerment of local people and park users.

Alongside the Charter for Parks, there should be a simple and accessible 'Charter for Wildlife', produced by communities, which links both to everyday lives and to Council and other policies.

“The big issue with public green space and Covid is that there’s been a huge increase in the amount of people using green space... but no money’s been allocated to deal with the additional usage and wear and tear. With increasingly underfunded and understaffed local park services ... there must be a call for adequate funding, a good simple mechanism for raising all this is to get everyone to sign the Charter for Parks.”

DAVE MORRIS, LONDON FRIENDS OF GREEN SPACES NETWORK

“The Local Authority delivery organisation is always subject to repeated cuts, or at least financial pressure on the budget and they don’t have any spare capacity for liaising to a greater degree with local community groups. The only way, I think, to identify suitable mechanisms for increasing or empowering communities is simply to persist ... starting local and then London wide, creating networks which become part of a national system of organisations that represent friends’ groups and local green spaces.”

ROBIN BROWN, HAYES COMMUNITY FORUM

Links

- JustSpace.org.uk or on twitter [@JustSpace7](https://twitter.com/JustSpace7)
- UCL housekeeping on collaboration UCLjustspace.wordpress.com and <https://justspace.org.uk/about/collaborate>
- London Plan and Mayor's Recovery material at London.gov.uk
- Jennifer Robinson & Kattya Attuyer, ***OPDC capturing value, London style***, in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research IJURR 2020 <https://bit.ly/39hx4il>
- Barbara Lipietz, Tim Wickson, Dana Sousa-Limbu and Richard Lee introduce the project on **community impacts of Covid-19** done by staff and students at the DPU, UCL with Just Space.
<https://www.thebartlettreview.com/features/mapping-lockdown's-impact-on-community-planning-groups>
- Email Michael Edwards M.Edwards@ucl.ac.uk