

Talk the Walk Making Neighbourhoods more neighbourly – 6 April 2011 – South London Gallery - Positives, Negatives, Barriers

Positives

People in the public realm smiling
Outside the pub at the station
Public art – playful interventions

Access to green spaces
Connected walkways
Community centre / Children's charity
A tenants' hall – chance for people to come together. Signs showed involvement.
Lucas Park: mixed use: jazz/kids etc. – private space and social space – so choice – good!

Time and space to relax and reflect
Green is good
Variety in style and quality

Stamp of new but not universally liked
Blue house – talking point, landmark, meeting point
Play area in park – natural – not age specific – imaginative, not restricted by equipment purpose

People living side by side – social and private housing
Space for young people to use
Community centre on Pelican estate looked well used
Lots of foot traffic – people walking
Very calm until near Peckham Road, when it got very noisy!

Common space inviting features e.g. seating
Fences delineating common spaces
Natural play spaces, grass and trees

Negatives

Signage – don't do this

McNeil Road
Housing backing on to streets
No active frontages
Main roads / traffic pollution

Lack of reason to go out and use space – no benches – no community gardens – sterile

One playground empty and one full
Prohibitive signage
Too much concrete and brick

Recycling – unattractive – function but no form, no ownership
Cars over usable space – social housing – not for people
No seating for anyone without children!
No clear neighbourhood – what or how or who? How big / How small?

Andrew@rethinkincities.net 07725555460 www.talkthewalk.info

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Unused space badly kept
Fences – aesthetics, over protecting
Too much concrete

Barriers

Cumbersome process e.g. licenses and approvals
Health & Safety
Short term funding and support non-sustainable
Community safety issues and fears
ASB – lack of constructive activities – attitudes to young people, lack of youth workers / outreach workers
Need for good design – urban planning approach – cars vs pedestrians
Custom and practise – closed minds vs new ways of working

Community development: what's the issue? Is there an issue?

Time vs funding vs need
Done to – play by their rules
House trained activists
Big Society
Activists seizing opportunities
Glass ceiling
Political will

Media – obstacle – negative image of young people
Turnover of residents – old vs new

Assumptions but what communities are – identify what “community” members think the community is.
Community of place – feeling safe even when
Funding – matching what actually works to what funders want to fund / political – more participative approach
Use parks as glue?

Fear
Lack of information / wrong perceptions
Transition populations
False notion of social cohesion (New Labour / Big Society myth)
“Community” imposed on working class and “underclass”
Crap social engineering
Community is global e.g. Turkish Cypriots watching community Turkish TV
Not everyone is someone you want to know (% of socio paths etc.)
Same face bias – need positive emotions

Funding stream – restrictions: time, tick boxes, data, evaluations
Distorts focus
Boundaries – local authority, Goals too defined, not place based
Privatisation not managed properly – not local
Consultations waste of money
Fragmented accountability
Hidden agendas instead: Place-based thinking

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