

# A COMMUNITY-POWERED NEIGHBOURHOOD IN EUSTON

## A HOUSING PACT FOR EUSTON: COMMUNITY RESEARCH COMMISSION



**FULL REPORT: FEBRUARY 2026**



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# FOREWORD BY CAMDEN COUNCIL

Camden Council, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Euston Housing Delivery Group are working together to explore how to deliver thousands of new homes, including affordable housing, in the Euston area. At the heart of this is an ambition to set a new standard for how we work with the community to shape plans for new housing.

To turn this vision into action, we commissioned Euston-based Old Diorama Arts Centre to lead a research project with Fitzrovia Youth in Action, Hopscotch Women's Centre, and Somers Town Community Association. Through creative workshops they engaged hundreds of residents to build on what we know about local priorities, needs, and ambitions for future housing.

This report captures those insights and the message from the community is clear: residents want homes that are affordable and promote physical and mental wellbeing; neighbourhoods that are safe, green, and inclusive; and partnerships where community voices genuinely shape decisions.

These insights were made possible through the incredible work of our community partners. Their trusted relationships, deep local knowledge, and arts-led approach have helped us reach more people, spark meaningful conversations and inspire change. We would also like to thank the residents, community activists, and industry leaders who helped shape this research.

This report is just the beginning. These findings will feed into Euston's first community housing pact, which will set out commitments for how we can work with residents to design and deliver new housing in Euston. Together, we are laying the foundations for a future Euston that is truly community-powered.

Councillor Richard Olszewski,  
Leader of Camden Council



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between August and November 2025, [Old Diorama Arts Centre](#) (ODAC) was commissioned by Camden Council on behalf of the Euston Housing Delivery Group to conduct community research on the principles and priorities of Euston residents for the future of housing in the area.

ODAC collaborated with organisations across the area to reach deep into the community, and delivered an arts-led, person-centred approach to the questions: “What makes a good home?”, “What makes a good neighbourhood?” and “How do we work in partnership to make this a reality?” Fitzrovia Youth in Action also delivered a specific young person-led focus group project around the same questions.

Together, we harnessed the power of creativity to unlock potentially difficult conversations around existing housing and the future of new homes in Euston. Residents of all ages took part, alongside local people with lived experience of homelessness; sharing openly and honestly their challenges and needs for the future of living in Euston - and how to get there.

Residents of all ages told us:

- Good homes are the foundation of health and wellbeing, and should be truly affordable, accessible and adaptable to the needs of their inhabitants - starting with existing homes alongside new builds.
- A good neighbourhood is safe, green and brings people together; with clean air, connected communities, and diverse and sustainable public spaces, services and social infrastructure.
- Partnership must be authentically collaborative, where residents’ voices have real influence and impact. A new model for resident (including young people) decision-making should be developed and co-designed, with community organisations supported as facilitators.

Through trust, deep conversation, crafting and making, participatory theatre, and inspiring examples of the possibilities of community power, we discovered what people of Euston have experienced, what’s important to them.

The world is watching Euston’s regeneration. The area’s complex and unique conditions have the potential to facilitate something extraordinary for local people and the nation, but we need to ensure it is a community-powered neighbourhood, not a gentrified transport and commerce hub where communities are displaced.

# CONTEXT

- London and the UK are experiencing a [housing crisis](#).
- In March 2025, 8,380 households were on the [social housing waiting list](#) in Camden.
- [Action On Empty Homes](#) data shows that in 2024 there were 10,506 mixed-tenure empty dwellings in Camden. A [Freedom of Information request](#) released by Camden Council in 2025 notes there are currently 883 empty council-owned homes.
- [Camden had the second-highest rate in London of rough sleeping in 2024](#). The Euston Road being a key site for people experiencing homelessness living in tents.
- Residents in Euston continue to live amidst the ongoing disruption of HS2, the UK's largest and most controversial civil engineering project.

ODAC is an arts creation and community centre with Euston as our inspiration, collaborator and stage. Located on the edge of Regent's Park Estate where the impact of HS2 and wider regeneration is impossible to ignore, we work with the urban change organisations in the area, on the side of the local community.

In May 2025, the London Borough of Camden (LBC), as part of its wider work on housing with the Euston Housing Delivery Group - set up by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - set out a brief for a local community organisation to undertake a research commission on new housing. [Old Diorama Arts Centre](#) led a proposal with [Fitzrovia Youth in Action](#), [Somers Town Community Association](#) and [Hopscotch Women's Centre](#) to undertake a series of creative community engagement events, on the understanding that this research would inform a framework that would ensure that going forward the community's needs are understood and woven into the outset of any projects.

The purpose of the research brief from LBC was to both review and build on what had already been gathered during consultations over the preceding eight years, in particular, community sentiment and priorities for new housing in Euston. The Pact provides an opportunity to formalise intents and ways of working. This research was undertaken using art and creativity to engage people of all ages, and reach deep into the community through trusted networks and local organisations.

The hope is that the Pact provides a framework to ensure that community needs are understood and woven into the outset of any future projects. Researchers were tasked with ensuring that resident voices were meaningfully sought out, listened to, and platformed within this research.

This summary report presents the community priorities and principles we learned during our research, and sets out the community voice on future Euston housing.

# ODAC'S APPROACH

ODAC's vision is to catalyse artistic creation and collaboration to transform our society and city. The arts bring people together and open the door to conversations and connections that can't happen any other way.

Our programmes embed community voices as decision makers and active participants in work that shapes their local area. From an arts-led perspective, we work collaboratively with cross-sector partners to realise opportunities across Euston - in both our programmes and public realm projects. Creativity-based approaches enable more nuanced, deeper and positivity-focussed conversations. ODAC understands creative arts could play a crucial role as a catalyst for positive change within existing decision-making structures for participatory democracy and policy creation.

Therefore, we recognised the opportunity this brief presented to use a creative arts approach to transform community consultation. Witnessing the everyday impact of regeneration wrought by HS2 and the lack of agency experienced by residents in this changing landscape, we held a unique position as a bridge between communities and local authorities.

Vital to the success of this project was trust. ODAC's trust in the creative process, LBC's trust in community organisations to deliver this research, and the trust that each of the community organisations has built with the community through longstanding relationships. However, the research made it clear that trust between Euston development partners and local communities had been broken.

Trust and creativity together, combined with experienced outreach processes and facilitation, have enabled the project to reach people who haven't always been heard. We hope that the proven success of this radical endeavour informs all future ways of connecting communities with consultation, gathering voices, and making change across our neighbourhoods and cities.

*"It's hard to have hard conversations, and it's hard to imagine what's possible while in the middle of the current reality. This project has been, like much of ODAC's work, about creating the right, trusted conditions for people to come together and connect, converse properly, and imagine. We're honoured that hundreds of Euston residents have shared their needs, opinions, and dared to dream with us. Citizen power is growing here. We are your ally." - Daniel Pitt, ODAC Creative Director & Chief Executive.*

# RESEARCH PROCESS SUMMARY

Between August and November 2025, ODAC delivered an arts-led, person-centred and trauma-informed relational approach to community research, using creativity to unlock potentially difficult conversations around existing housing and the future of new homes in Euston.

The research took place through the following strands of activity:

- **WEAVING IDEAS** - interactive activity at Regent's Roots Festival to frame the research methods. (2nd August 2025)
- **MAKING/CONVERSATION** - 14 workshops with community partners, using craft and making to unpack personal experiences and hopes around present and future housing in Euston. (September - October 2025)
- **BLUEPRINTS** - a festival of ideas around community-powered housing and the principles of community decision-making, through workshops, talks and interactive exhibitions. (29th October - 1st November 2025)
- **ONE ROOF'S BEYOND THE NEGATIVES** - ODAC's programme with people with lived experience of homelessness - devised an interactive theatre project to better understand the perspectives of those for whom the housing system has failed. (September - October 2025)
- **FITZROVIA YOUTH IN ACTION'S NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTORS** - a weekly participatory youth-led focus group to embed the voices of young people whose future will be affected by the outcomes of the research. (September - November 2025)

ODAC collaborated with many Euston-based community organisations throughout the process. This network of collaboration enabled conversations to extend deep into the community and widen the research responses to reflect diverse perspectives from across our area.



# CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH FINDINGS



## KEY INSIGHTS

Across every theme, the needs residents described can be summarised in the following ways:

RESEARCH QUESTION	NEED	REASON	EVIDENCE
What makes a good HOME?	Repair, maintenance and retrofit of what already exists	Health, safety, cost of living, sustainability	Current homes need ventilation, insulation, working fixtures
What makes a good NEIGHBOURHOOD?	Local spaces and relationships	Mental health, belonging, informal support	Community centres, shared spaces, parks, neighbour networks being lost to construction or underfunding
How can we best work in PARTNERSHIP?	Shared decision-making with accountability	Trust, legitimacy, fairness	Participants seeking opportunity for co-design, transparency, and ongoing involvement

Residents of all ages are clearly and emphatically asking for:

- Homes that are affordable, and support their physical, emotional and developmental wellbeing
- Neighbourhoods that are safe, green and bring people together
- Partnerships where residents' voices have real influence and impact

Though conversations with residents yielded many different perspectives, desires and ideas, these three intersecting sentiments were fundamental to all who participated in the research.



# WHO WE MET

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Across 14 workshops, we engaged 152 participants aged 4 to 95. Adults aged 55–64 represented the highest number of participants, with notable engagement among young people aged 11–17. Approximately 74% of participants were female and 26% male.

The ethnic backgrounds of the two largest representative groups we reached were Bangladeshi and Bengali heritage residents (30 indicated), alongside a similarly sized group identifying as White / European (30 indicated).

## POSTCODES

This research was targeted specifically at residents within the Euston Area Plan (postcodes NW1, W1 & WC1). 56 workshop participants indicated that they were from this area. An additional 59 participants indicated postcodes that border this area and who are directly connected to and impacted by its development. It is important to recognise that people living adjacent to the area of consultation are deeply embedded in this community, and their voices should be included in decisions affecting its future.

## HOUSING STATUS

The majority of participants who responded to the forms indicated that they are socially housed, with almost equal representation from Housing Association residents (36) and LBC social housing residents (31). This reflects a predominantly low-income, secure-tenure resident base, aligned closely with the estates and neighbourhoods within the Euston Area Plan footprint.

## PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

10 people who are, or have experienced homelessness or housing precarity participated in an eight-week-long creative research response culminating in *Beyond the Negatives* - an immersive, story-telling experience and performance, presented as part of Blueprints Festival.

## YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FITZROVIA YOUTH IN ACTION

24 young people (aged 11 to 17 years) met for weekly workshops over a period of seven weeks. The majority of the young people lived on the Regents Park Estate (92%) with 8% living in Somers Town. Most of the participants were young men (71%) and 19% being young women. The ethnic backgrounds of the young people participating was 50% Bangladeshi, 12% Black African, 8% White British, 4% Nepalese and 13% other backgrounds.

## COMMUNITY RESPONSES

Our workshops researched three main questions, with the resulting outputs summarised as follows:

### 1) WHAT MAKES A GOOD HOME?

- *“Good homes are the foundation of health and wellbeing”*

The conversations we had highlighted the need for meaningful investment in existing homes now, rather than exclusive investment in building new homes.

- *“We just need homes that don’t make us sick.”*

Additionally, residents often described a comfortable home life in the context of a sense of shared community.

- *“What makes a good home? Good neighbours!”*

Residents wanted future plans to focus not only on building new homes, but on bringing existing homes up to a decent, liveable standard, including creating mechanisms for homes and spaces to be adaptable for residents’ changing needs.

Residents described in detail a ‘good home’ as:

- Warm without being expensive to heat, with the ability to control internal temperatures and ventilation.
- Free from damp and mould, which can be seriously harmful, in particular, to children and older residents.
- Enough space for all members of the family - for personal privacy, study and play, with enough bedrooms for each member of the family to enable proper rest and sleep, for personal care and wellbeing, as well as enough shared space to encourage harmonious family life.
- Adaptable spaces which are able to accommodate disability, appropriate to the changing needs of all ages and stages of life, as well as respecting a range of different family situations and cultural preferences in how residents inhabit and share communal space.
- Easy access to fresh air and green space/s, even where space is limited. For example, for every flat to have its own balcony, and have access to shared courtyards and/or shared gardens.

The evidence we gathered highlighted:

- The issues of damp and mould were raised 20+ times across five separate groups. These issues were frequently linked to the onset of asthma cases, as well as a major disruption to sleep, with some bedrooms becoming uninhabitable, thus exacerbating overcrowding and privacy issues.
- The issues of heating, insulation and draughty windows were raised 9+ times across five groups.
- Overcrowding and space constraints were raised 11+ times. Perceived consequences of overcrowding include an impact on children's learning as well as severely impacting individual privacy and being uncondusive to enhancing and maintaining family relationships. This was a priority for young people who took part in workshops.

## 2) WHAT MAKES A GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD?

- *“A good neighbourhood is one where people can gather together, know their neighbours, move freely and breathe clean air”*

The feedback we gathered in response to this question demonstrates the importance of a shared local infrastructure with a range of community spaces, organisations, useful shops and facilities, places for play, and peace and quiet, are all as important as housing itself.

People described a 'good neighbourhood' as an area with nearby places to gather, feel safe, and feel free to live everyday life, where people know each other, and can meet their needs locally. Residents identified neighbourhood wellbeing as something collective, rather than individual.

A good neighbourhood has:

- A variety of local community spaces and activities. Residents specifically referenced youth clubs, sewing circles, dance, skill sharing, food growing spaces and lunch clubs.
- Well-kept and well-maintained parks and green areas with a range of play spaces that serve all ages, not just for toddlers, and community food growing opportunities
- Clean, well-lit, safe streets and communal areas - both externally and internally.
- Shops and services that are truly affordable for the people who live here, and serve their needs.
- Transport routes and walking paths that are safe, well-lit, accessible and convenient, particularly during construction disruption.
- Better support for people who have drugs, alcohol problems or who are experiencing homelessness, so these issues are reduced and less present within the community. This was the most raised issue amongst the young people in terms of their sense of feeling unsafe in the neighbourhood.

The evidence we gathered highlighted:

- The importance of maintaining existing and increasing shared community spaces was the most asked-for neighbourhood priority - 30 times across nine groups.
  - The need for parks and green spaces was raised 35 times across 11 groups.
  - Concerns about construction noise, dust, pollution and safety were raised 26 times across seven groups.
- 
- *“I’d like a park within walking distance for picnics & conversations.”*
  - *“Community spaces & facilities are important. I come two or three times a week: Women’s group, dancing, singing, eating, exercise classes.”*
  - *“Events to bring the community together to integrate + learn how to mix + live together!”*

Additionally, a good neighbourhood was described in reference to shared local institutions:

- *“Centres like Third Age Project are essential.”*
- *“The Surma Centre must be protected.”*
- *“ODAC is like my living room.”*

Residents want existing neighbourhood institutions to be properly resourced, maintained and managed, that parks and green spaces are protected, enhanced and improved, and the impacts of construction on air and noise are properly and consistently addressed. Residents also asked that their everyday services and social infrastructure remain local and accessible: shops that are affordable, locally-focussed transport, and that medical services, schools remain nearby and accessible.



My Key  
Represent:-  
Talking to others  
to find out how to  
get help and informat  
ion, needed to  
Maintain a  
happy healthy  
life.

Older people are  
a treasure of the  
community not a  
burden, their  
voice &  
needs  
should  
come  
first!  
♥

We know  
how many people live  
here now, and how many  
are in overcrowding - not by choice  
but because council + developers can't  
currently utilise that data + act on  
it in a preventative way but  
through this process we need to  
think about those future adults  
who are not given many choices  
about what they live, how they  
live + how they can  
not continue to struggle  
to access healthy,  
safe, happy homes  
and neighbourhoods!!

Please include  
the vulnerable  
women fleeing abusive  
homes to have access  
to safe homes quickly  
♥

### 3) HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE THIS A REALITY?

- *“Partnership must be authentically collaborative and a new model for resident voice developed”*

Residents described their experiences of taking part in numerous previous consultations leaving them feeling that they were without any real influence or agency to affect changes or further decision-making processes.

Residents felt that consultation processes were tokenistic, being more of a tick-box exercise than anything really meaningful that would be truly impactful for future outcomes. Frequently, ‘the council’ becomes a byword for bigger powers that let them down and frustrate them - though some understand that in Euston, the context is bigger than LBC.

Residents described the value of partnership as relational, based on listening, good communication and follow-through with shared responsibility. Residents repeatedly expressed that they have been consulted many times, however, their input has not been translated into visible change. This has led to fatigue, frustration, and a sense of being spoken to, rather than being worked with.

As defined by residents, partnership is not about participating in someone else’s plan - it is about having real influence over decisions, receiving clear information in accessible formats, and seeing outcomes that reflect what has been shared.



Residents indicate their understanding of partnership as being:

- Active, careful listening that can be clearly demonstrated in the outcomes and next steps.
- A broad process of shared decision-making, especially around design, resource allocation, prioritisation and sequencing of next steps.
- Accessible, age-appropriate processes with a range of ways to participate that ensure language support, timings and childcare considerations are not prohibitive to participation, and, overall, ensuring a range of print, in-person and digital information is available to suit all needs, languages and abilities.
- Timely and comprehensive follow-through and communication about next steps, actions and updates, with clear accountability, rather than perpetuating consultation as an empty engagement activity.

The evidence we gathered highlighted:

- Concerns over communication and transparency appeared by far the most, over 50 times across all of the groups.
  - Co-design and shared decision-making were the strongest partnership themes, appearing 17 times across seven groups.
  - Barriers to participation were clearly identified with residents highlighting a range of issues, including: power dynamics between different age groups; the need for access to information in multiple languages with translation support; childcare support; timing/scheduling of events; and participation not limited to digital access only.
- *“I go to the consultations but nobody listens. It’s making me depressed.”*
  - *“What would help? If our decisions actually had weight.”*

Residents stated that this is not a request for more meetings - it is a call for a different, more authentic, flexible and impactful way of working together.



# FINDINGS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE



The following findings from Fitzrovia Youth in Action's Neighbourhood Connectors programme span the three brief themes of 'Home', 'Neighbourhood' and 'Partnership', and include quotes in italics, from the young people.

## HOME

- *"Most young people associate home with family and private space."*

This close association with family relationships and family circumstances meant that some young people felt uncomfortable discussing home in a group setting, especially when their living situation was challenging.

- *"Home is a space for family and chilling."*

Most young people associated home with family, which, for most of the group, was positive. Some described home as their safe space. Many young people talked about home as the place where they could *"get online, play Xbox, and relax"*.

- *"Home is a place where you can actually relax."*
- *"Home should have enough space for young people to have privacy and to study."*

Many of the young people felt their homes were too small. Many share bedrooms with siblings, a few young people did not have a bedroom and sleep in the living room. This can impact sleep patterns and mean that they do not have a quiet or private space to study and relax.

- *"Home should have space to play (indoors and outside)."*

Many of the young people talked about how important it was to have space to play and hang out at home, whether this was enough space inside the home or a garden. This was particularly important as many young people do not feel safe outside.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD

- *"A good neighbourhood should be safe."*

Most young people talked about the presence of drug dealers or people presenting as having drug or alcohol dependencies. They described *"sketchy alleys"*, unsafe routes to the neighbourhood and antisocial behaviour on their doorsteps (making even getting into their home feel unsafe). They also

mentioned homelessness in this context and felt there needed to be more support for people with problems in the community, and improved security and street lighting.

- *“A good neighbourhood should have space for play and for older young people to socialise.”*

Most young people talked about the poor maintenance of play and outdoor spaces. Young people didn't always feel parks and green spaces were safe or clean. This, in turn, highlighted the importance of them having supervised youth clubs or spaces for young people to spend time. This is especially important when home is busy and there is no private space or space to have friends around.

- *“A good neighbourhood should be clean and give you pride in your neighbourhood.”*

Most of the young people asked, *“Why does our area have rubbish and look uncared for?”* *“Why can't it look like Mayfair?”* A few young people talked about having to step over *“vomit and needles”* to get to their front doors and how this gave them a sense that their neighbourhood was not being looked after.

- *“I want the area to look nice and pleasurable”.*

## WORKING TOGETHER

- *“Offer a choice of different ways young people can get involved.”*

Most young people wanted to have a voice in decision-making, but wanted options on how to do this. Some young people wanted to be involved in co-design.

- *“I would rather see the outcome of my ideas and see the community actually improve”.*

A few young people preferred to be consulted in short-term traditional ways because it was less time commitment, or because they felt that individual consultation would give them a space to share their views more easily.

- *“The council need to listen to youngers”*
- *“Create spaces where young people can feel heard.”*

Most young people wanted targeted spaces for young people's voices. Many in the group felt they may not be able to comfortably voice their opinions in forums where adults from the community or professionals were present because of the power dynamics.

- *“I would prefer to have a youth panel, adults might have different opinions than us.”*

A few said they wanted to be integrated into wider community forums. They felt that the sharing of ideas directly would be beneficial and that they could also learn from the adults and professionals in the group.

- *“When you work with the community, you get perspective of both adults and children”*
- *“Involve young people in designing your consultation and co-design.”*

Most young people wanted to help ensure that the process was youth-friendly by helping to design consultation and engagement activities.

- *“Young people can resonate more with the target audience (of young people) rather than speaking to a professional who can make them feel uncomfortable”.*
- *“Design in motivation for involvement.”*

Most young people's motivation for involvement is to see improvements in their community, and where there were projects that they could see that they were making a difference, this was a big motivator. When this isn't possible (for example, in short-term projects), gaining new skills, experiencing social connections becomes important. For projects where these benefits could not be offered, vouchers and food became important motivators.



# CHAPTER 2: RECOMMENDATIONS



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSION IN THE PACT

Based on this research and sustained collaboration with residents, in November 2025, the following points were recommended for consideration by the Forum for inclusion in policy for Euston:

## TO START

- Outstanding housing repairs must be dealt with immediately. Community participation in neighbourhood-making of new housing cannot happen without it.
- Camden's Housing department needs to be directly and consistently involved in all issues relating to future planning: regeneration cannot be separated from housing.
- All urban change partners in the Euston area need to be held to the same terms and standards. Developers must not be allowed to change the rules later.
- Commit to ambitious numbers of social housing units, which must represent a net gain in the area, and must not be renegotiated later.
- Make commitments to existing residents for future homes - the existing community should have 'first dibs'.
- Young people should be centred in the development of housing, as it is them who will raise their families in them and cannot currently imagine still being able to live here.
- Create an open, drop-in, face-to-face helpdesk centre for housing problems (and other interconnected Council issues) in Euston. Perhaps the Euston Community Hub can be utilised or situated at one of the many community groups across Euston.

## HOME DESIGN

- Design must address the specific cultural and social needs of the communities that reside here.
- Design must follow guidelines set by previous community research.
- Homes should be built sustainably, and with repair and adaptability built in.
- Priority should be to build family-sized homes (and some with space for multiple generations).
- Accessibility should be built as standard.
- New homes should be constructed and operate in a carbon-negative manner with net-zero emissions from start to finish.
- Biodiversity corridors and meaningful greenspace must be incorporated into all designs.

## DURING WORKS

- Real action needs to be taken to mitigate the impact of works, and increase transparency: residents have asked for transparent hoardings so they can see construction work in

progress, and implement continual air and noise monitoring, 'dust bubbles' to cover the entire construction works.

- There should be compensation for residents and local businesses experiencing development disruption - for example, a waiver of residential Council Tax, free travel passes, vouchers to support local shops and businesses, and reduced or no business rates.

## CREATING A NEIGHBOURHOOD

- A Public Health-first approach to neighbourhood-making should be prioritised: can Euston be (re-)built using [the Marmot Approach?](#)
- A progressive approach to land ownership must be taken:
  - Incorporate an understanding of the failures of current leasehold and property management policy
  - Support and nurture the use of Community Land Trusts, Housing Co-operatives, Community Builders, and Community Asset Developers. Further research is required here on which models.
- There must be investment in community-led initiatives, including greening, micro-farms/hydroponics, food growing spaces, youth clubs and creative spaces.
- The local economy and the development of local people should be prioritised: fund and create local jobs and apprenticeships.
- Cultural and community space needs to be locked into the development plans with watertight Section 106 agreements.

## WORKING TOGETHER

- All partners should be aiming for their work to be truly resident-led.
- There should be a collaboratively-made exact definition of co-design for urban design in Euston, which values both lived and professional experience, and is not 'consultation by another name' to be used by all partners.
- Community organisations should be responsible for a centralised approach to community engagement. No more high-paid corporate 'engagement' staff who rely on the goodwill of the community sector.
- Training in relational practice and trauma-informed working needs to be integrated into all work with residents.
- Culturally specific, paid community ambassadors, mediators and translators should be used.

- Support the development of a new 'Community Power Platform': a values-led, functional, participatory, accountable model of local democracy and governance in the area to make key decisions.
- Invest in community infrastructure for the long term and in community organising and support.

## YOUNG PEOPLE

- Young people's engagement should be compulsory, with youth-led forums created.
- Young people should have a choice of different ways to get involved, with spaces where they can feel heard.
- Co-design youth led engagement plans with young people.
- Consider the incentives and motivation for involvement when trying to engage young people.



## A PLATFORM FOR RESIDENT VOICE

There is a clear mandate from residents for a significant shift in the way in which ‘community engagement’ is done. To this end, this report’s recommendation is to develop a model of accessible, democratic participation for Euston’s communities, particularly including young people.

Residents want a new model of neighbourhood governance: phrases such as ‘Community Council’ or ‘Community Power Platform’ gathered momentum. From workshops at Blueprints Festival, there is a clear mandate for the establishment of a new, community-led structure or body that would not duplicate but exist alongside and feed in/out of the current structures. Young people made it clear that structures led by young people work best for their engagement.

The initial Principles for the development and operation of the ‘Community Power Platform’ were co-designed with community members and written up by the community innovation charity, Footwork.

These are:

1. **PURPOSEFUL AND DISTINCT:** We will learn from and coordinate with what already exists while offering something genuinely new and needed, and we will avoid duplicating the work of existing bodies.
2. **DEMOCRATIC AND TRANSPARENT GOVERNANCE:** Decision-making processes will be open, fair, and clearly communicated. We will use accessible, participatory methods (e.g., inclusive voting, well-supported facilitation, regular meetings at varied times) to ensure everyone can influence outcomes. Leadership roles will be clearly defined, accountable, and rotated or reviewed to prevent concentration of power.
3. **EQUITY, ANTI-OPPRESSION AND ADDRESSING POWER IMBALANCE:** Power is unevenly distributed in our community. We actively address imbalances—historic and present—by designing structures and facilitation practices that centre fairness and anti-oppressive values. We pay careful attention to groups who have been marginalised, overlooked, or harmed by previous processes.
4. **INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND LOW BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION:** Anyone who wishes to participate should be able to. Diversity is a core measure of our success.
5. **TRAUMA-INFORMED, CARING PRACTICE:** We recognise that people bring emotions, lived experience, and sometimes trauma into community work. Our spaces will be designed with care, respect, and psychological safety—acknowledging emotional needs and managing conflict constructively. We aim to create environments that do not retraumatise but instead support healing, belonging, and dignity.
6. **FAIR COMPENSATION AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCING:** We value people’s time, labour, and expertise. Where possible, we offer fair compensation or expenses for participation. We

will develop sustainable resourcing—balancing community capacity with contracted professional support where appropriate—to ensure the network can operate effectively.

7. **COLLABORATION AND CONNECTION:** We work alongside existing organisers, projects, and institutions—not in competition with them.
8. **CONTINUOUS LEARNING, REFLECTION AND ADAPTATION:** We commit to ongoing learning about our own power, impact, and limitations. We will regularly review how well our structures are working, how inclusive we are, and how effectively we are distributing power—and we will adapt based on feedback and experience.

## THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Community organisations are the key to enabling and facilitating resident-led engagement. A healthy charity and community sector in Euston is an asset to the area, the potential of urban change, and the success of community engagement as a resident-led practice. Ten leaders from community organisations in and around Euston, facilitated by consultant OURI Labs, came together to develop a united understanding on how to work with urban change partners. The community organisations were clear in their purpose and unanimous that while there is expertise within their teams, their work and their ambitions are intended to best enable resident empowerment in these processes.

- Trust was identified as the foundation of effective collaboration, in all directions.
- Workshop participants emphasised the importance of recognising the expertise that community organisations bring, regardless of their size.
- Participants stressed that authentic collaboration should recognise and centre the value of organisations of all sizes.
- Participants were clear that community expertise must be *"valued, respected and equated in financial terms in what we're bringing to the table."*
- The group was unequivocal that *"sustained engagement requires pay"* and that community contributions should not be taken for granted.
- Care emerged as a value emphasising the importance of relationships and accountability.
- Participants noted the need to make social value visible, particularly to commercial and private organisations.



Community organisations are asking all urban development stakeholders and parties to commit to a radical and lasting shift in power dynamics, ensuring that resident-led equity, long-term accountability, and fair resource distribution underpin all future work. This is the foundation for an authentic partnership.

Community organisations in Euston require commitment to the following Principles:

1. **THE COMMUNITY AS THE EXPERTS (GRASSROOTS-LED GOVERNANCE):** Recognising that local community members and established organisations hold the necessary expertise (lived experience and social infrastructure) to design and deliver effective projects.
2. **RESIDENT-CENTRED ENGAGEMENT (TRUST AND INCLUSION):** Centring residents of all ages voices and leadership in neighbourhood development. Collaboration must happen on residents' terms, designed to be accessible, trauma-informed, and directly beneficial to participants, not extractive.
3. **INCLUSIVE ORGANISATIONAL EQUITY (FAIR RESOURCING):** All contributing organisations, regardless of size or scale (from small neighbourhood groups to larger anchor institutions), must be heard, valued, and appropriately supported.
4. **LONG-TERM IMPACT ACCOUNTABILITY (MEASURED SUCCESS):** Collaboration must move beyond performative engagement to produce measurable, long-term results that genuinely benefit the community and shift power dynamics.



# CHAPTER 3: PROCESS



The following section outlines the creative research activities undertaken throughout the project. Detail on these activities has been provided to contextualise the development of the process, each organisation's role in the delivery, and how the research findings came about.

## WEAVING IDEAS AT REGENT'S ROOTS FESTIVAL

Our research period began on August 2nd 2025 at Regent's Roots Festival - a community celebration and collaboration between ODAC and FYA taking place on Regent's Park Estate.

Here we presented a mass-engagement activity on a wall on Stanhope Street, inviting people to select and weave a coloured ribbon onto the wall, marking a colourful representation of the ways they 'would like to get involved in their neighbourhood', along with the 'things that mattered to them in their local area'.

We learned that our community desires opportunities to 'bring people together' in ways that centre 'creativity and art' and celebrate 'cultural diversity'. Importantly, community priorities include 'safety and security', 'health and wellbeing', and 'open and green spaces' before 'new housing', though it remains a high priority.



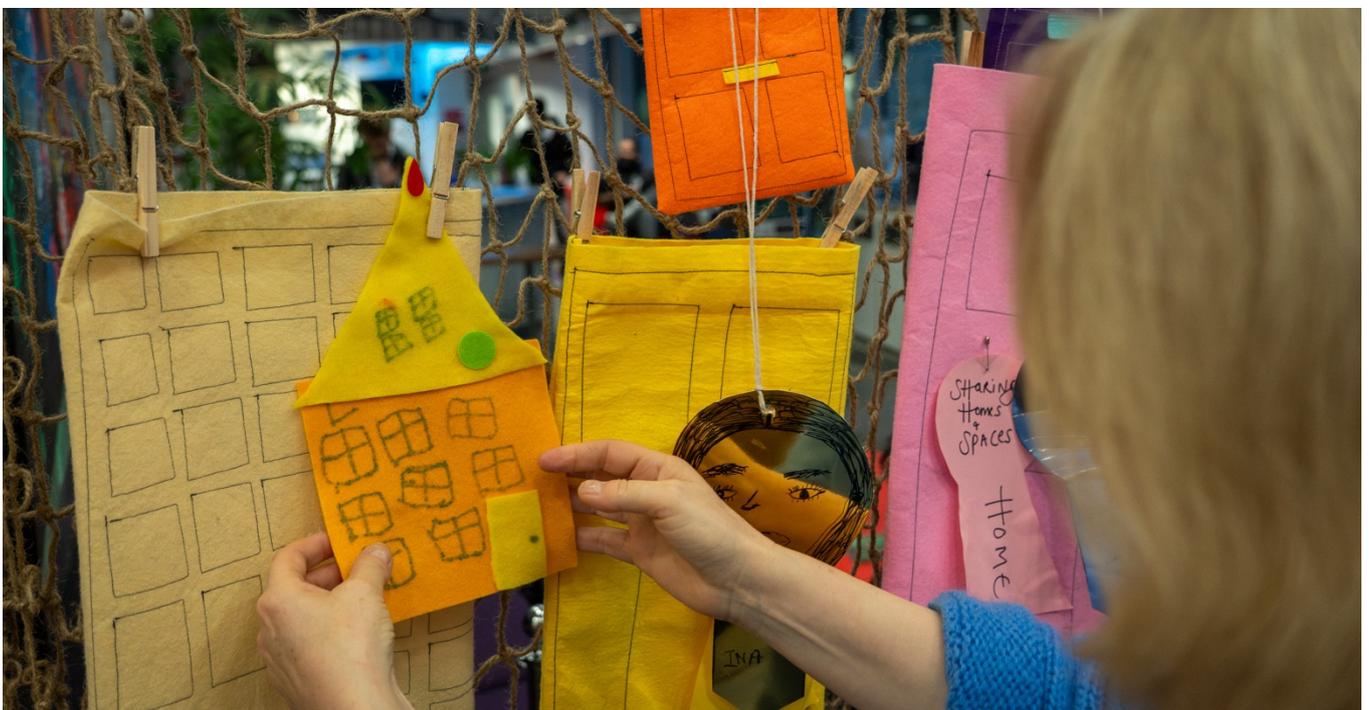
## MAKING/CONVERSATION WORKSHOPS

We delivered a series of 14 hands-on creative workshops as both closed and open-access sessions, in partnership with [Somers Town Community Association \(STCA\)](#), [Hopscotch Women's Centre](#), [Fitzrovia Youth in Action \(FYA\)](#), and local groups and organisations including, [Community Champions Regent's Park](#), [ODAC's One Roof](#), [FYA's Cumberland Youth Club](#), [Esther Randall Court](#), [A Space for Us People's Museum](#), and [Third Age Project](#). 152 people took part. Residents were not remunerated for their time or contributions.

The workshops were formed around the premise that by bringing people together to create and make - and by doing something with their hands - this would encourage more layered, nuanced conversations, enabling trust and connection to build between residents and the facilitators.

The activity was inspired by 'craftivism' where charged conversations can be diffused through collective making, as confrontational eye contact is reduced by looking down at the work in hand. As part of each workshop, we invited residents to design and craft a unit of their ideal home or neighbourhood space, which would then contribute to a larger, collective, hand-crafted neighbourhood model, entitled: *Me & Youston*. Each participant was also invited to create a self-portrait key, and describe on the back something they thought was 'key to a good home, neighbourhood or partnership'.

The workshops framed the facilitation team as distinct from the Council, open to active listening and participation. Tea and cakes were offered at each session, creating a caring, welcoming and homely feel. The space provided a forum for facilitated conversation, as a mindful, artistic experience - separate from and unlike previous consultation workshops.



## ONE ROOF: LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

ODAC is regularly attended by people with lived experience of homelessness through One Roof, the centre's dedicated programme. Including their voices in this research was essential. This strand was led by Nell Hardy, Creative Producer: One Roof and Artistic Director of [Response Ability Theatre](#).

Initial feedback to the commission brief showed distrust in the process, a lack of sensitivity and awareness to the many issues affecting the homelessness-experienced community, and a reticence to be involved, with participants expressing that they felt unlikely to ever benefit from the results of the work.

One Roof co-designed a project that included people who were reticent about the programme, as well as to amplify their voices and experience. One Roof collaborators developed an interactive storytelling experience, entitled: *Beyond the Negatives* - which took an empathy-first method to answer the question of how best to collaborate. The process was inspired and adapted from Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of The Oppressed' and 'Legislative Theatre' practices, aiming instead to cast people *without* lived experience in situations created by those *with* lived experience - being able to imagine the experience of a situation from another person's perspective.

This process gave a very different opportunity for engagement from this demographic in the project, where participation would otherwise not have been forthcoming. Accessible inclusion of this community and their perspectives garnered valuable insights for the wider research, and ultimately empowered homeless-experienced individuals to extend their involvement in the project and present at the first Forum.



## FITZROVIA YOUTH IN ACTION: NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTORS

For seven weeks, from September to November 2025, twenty-four young people, (aged eleven to seventeen years) from Fitzrovia Youth in Action (FYA) worked together to explore the themes of home, neighbourhood and having their voice heard in the Euston Development.



Delivered independently by Fitzrovia Youth in Action, the workshops were adapted to the age and stage of development of the young participants, ensuring workshops were safe, inclusive, fun and developmentally empowering. Using an agile approach and utilising a variety of methods including discussion, debate, interviews, games, playdough, small group models, adapting plans as they realised the sensitivity of public discussions around 'Home', 'Neighbourhoods' and 'Working Together' amongst young people.





## 1) ME + YOUSTON: INTERACTIVE MODEL NEIGHBOURHOOD EXHIBITION

Each handmade contribution of a home or neighbourhood space, crafted by participants during the Making/Conversation workshops, became part of an interactive artwork: *Me + Youston* - displayed in its entirety for the first time at Blueprints Festival.



The hand-made felt squares, transformed into 3D form, encompassed the ideas, people and places residents most valued in their area - flowers, trees, parks, ponds, home spaces, community spaces, views, streetscapes, activities and play.

These soft-play 3D blocks were then arranged into a large-scale immersive exhibition. Visitors were invited to arrange and rearrange the blocks to explore the neighbourhood's design and layout. Several other interactive elements were available in the exhibition space, including a making station where visitors were encouraged to create any additional features they felt were missing from the neighbourhood. Over the four days, the neighbourhood evolved and grew, thanks to the many visitors to the room.

Embedded in several of the blocks were audio-tagged stickers, each holding a soundbite of the maker describing what they had contributed, and why. These interactive stickers could be played through an audio-assistive tool - the PenFriend - deepening visitors' understanding of the individual aspects of the work and increasing its accessibility.



Also on display were each research participants' individual 'key', presenting a collective portrait of the community alongside their responses to the research in their own words, and a 'listening station' of FYA's Neighbourhood Connectors describing their thoughts on home, neighbourhood and partnerships.

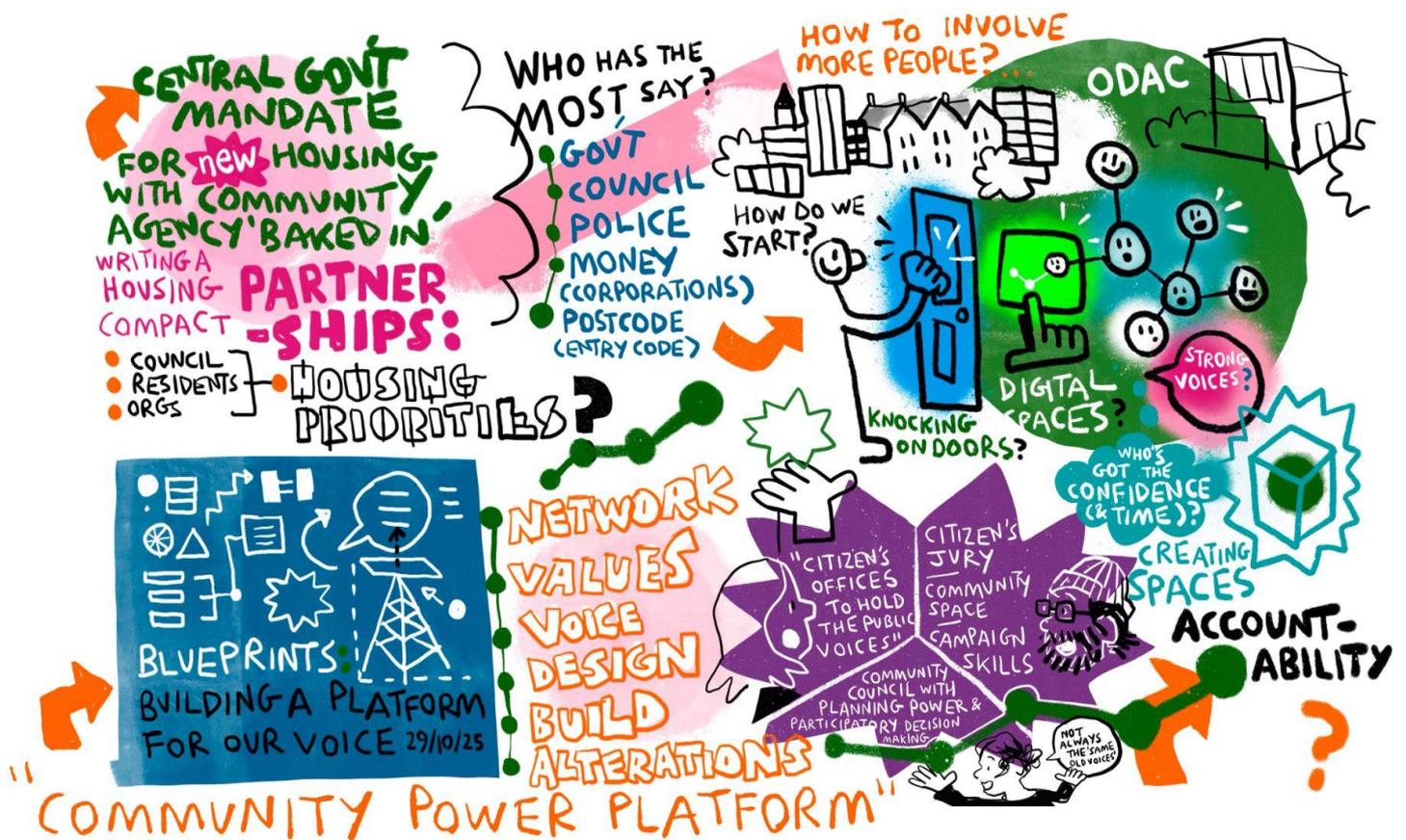
## 2) BUILDING A PLATFORM FOR OUR VOICE WORKSHOP:

To kick off the festival, Jason Leman, Neighbourhood Democracy Lead at [Citizen Network](#) facilitated an interactive workshop with 20 residents (predominantly engaging with Community Champions Regent's Park) to discuss how residents could build a platform for community voice in Euston by exploring the values around neighbourhood power structures.



These conversations raised several ideas for participatory citizen power, with an alternative Community Council gathering momentum, using the working title 'Community Power Platform'.

Visual notes below, and a full report is included in Appendices & Additional Materials.



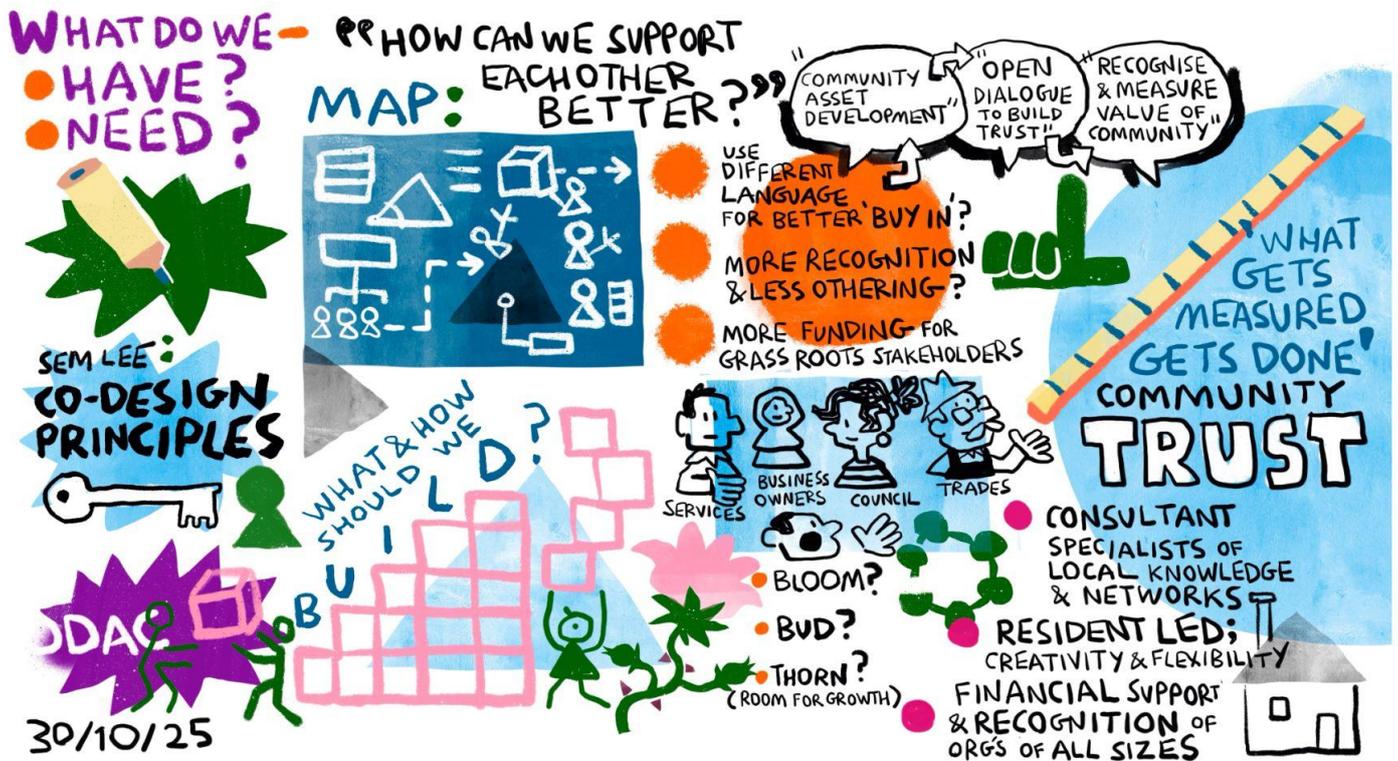
### 3) CO-DESIGN PRINCIPLES WORKSHOP:

Facilitated by Sem Lee of [OURI Labs](#), a co-design workshop was held with 10 local community stakeholders whose work is prevalent within the Euston area. The session was convened to develop a practical set of principles based on current experiences with cross-sectoral collaboration.



Organisations and groups represented were: [Old Diorama Arts Centre](#), [Fitzrovia Youth in Action](#), [Community Champions Regent's Park](#), [Hopscotch Women's Centre](#), [Somers Town Community Association](#), [Somers Town People's Museum](#), [Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum](#), [Third Age Project](#), [Holborn Community Association](#), and [Camden Community Centres' Consortium](#).

Visual notes below, and a full report is included in Appendices & Additional Materials. The principles are detailed in Chapter 2.



#### 4) “WHAT SHOULD A COMMUNITY-POWERED NEIGHBOURHOOD BE LIKE?” PRESENTATIONS AND TALKS

Bringing together residents, built environment professionals, activists, artists, and thinkers, 42 people gathered for an evening of talks and lessons learned from Euston, the wider Camden, and London-based community leaders, activists and academics on community-led regeneration, housing and alternative housing models. This included Community Land Trusts, Neighbourhood Forums, conservation areas, alternative economic models and more.



The speakers were: Nabil Al-Kinani ([Hood Preservation & Futurist Association](#)); Diana Foster ([A Space for Us](#)); Paulette Singer ([Our Yard at Clitterhouse Farm](#)); Milli-Rose Rubin (writer and musician, [Crossword Lyric](#)); Sem Lee (founder of urban research consultancy [OURI Labs](#)); Eleonora Andronaco (Juniper Crescent, Camden housing activist and actor); Tim Oshodi ([Downham Community Land Trust](#) and community-led regeneration consultant); Dee Searle ([Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum](#)); Dr Silvie Jacobi ([NW3 Community Land Trust](#)) and Dr Craig Reeves (specialist in renters rights law at Birkbeck, University of London).

We heard about the success of these models, the need for innovation in both economic models and governance, and the challenges of sustaining community leadership.

Residents told us they wanted to explore these further, including site visits to experience examples of projects residents have made happen, such as [Nubia Way](#), the UK’s first Black-led, self-build co-operative, which built 13 sustainable timber-frame homes in the 1990s.



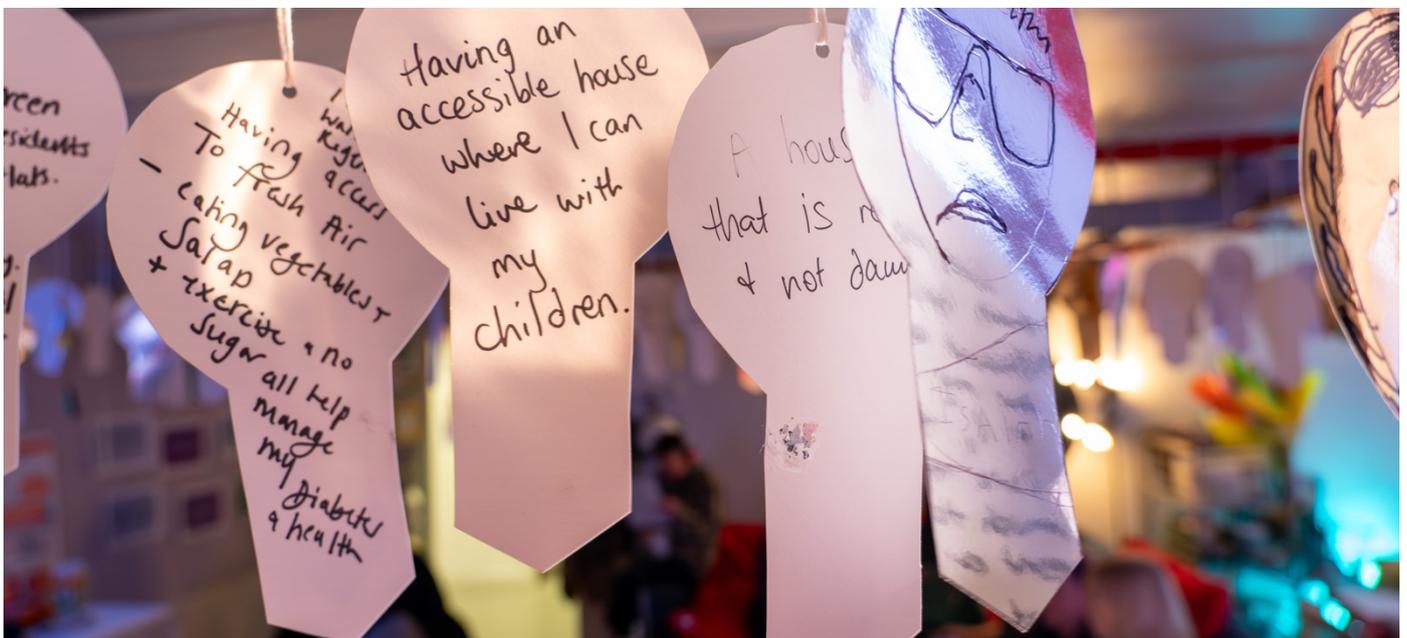
- *“I am so inspired by the local and wider community that gave talks on the evening of Big Ideas for the Blueprints festival. Every event was thought-provoking, with the added alchemy of the installation in the community room, it was so magical.”*





## 6) "HOW DO WE CLAIM POWER IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM AND GET ORGANISED TO MAKE DECISIONS?" WORKSHOP

Community innovation in placemaking charity [Footwork](#) provided a framework for the final workshop, co-delivered with ODAC's team, in which 16 residents further developed how they would want a 'Community Power Platform' or some kind of Community Council to operate. This is expanded upon in the 'Recommendations' section of this document. Further expansion of these notes is included in the Appendices & Additional Materials.



## 7) EXHIBITION

A Space for Us People's Museum in Somers Town, is campaigning for the conservation area based on this social housing heritage, and is preserving the stolen social housing art.

Curated by the museum and re-presented in ODAC's foyer gallery for the festival was *Social Housing – A Space for Us?*. This exhibition brought together historical posters of protest and public campaigns for social housing including, 'Your Britain: Fight for it Now' by Abram Games (1942), one of a series of three depicting progressive public buildings superimposed over bomb sites, promising a better future including building model housing, as well as more recent protest and campaign posters. In the exhibition were powerful local exemplars of social housing – from the pioneering St Pancras Housing Association to Camden Council and London County Council schemes that responded creatively to social need and display a vision for life.



## REFLECTIONS ON A CREATIVE APPROACH

Throughout this project, we have had the honour of connecting with hundreds of Euston community members, hearing their experience of living in this area now, and exploring what they hope for the future.

Our method encouraged and enabled residents to participate and express themselves much more deeply. The facilitated conversations allowed responses to emerge across a broad range of themes, and for sensitive and sometimes traumatic experiences to be expressed in a supportive, facilitated and held environment. Creative response opportunities through crafting/making enabled participation across language, age, and ability.

Deep discussions took place on themes of homes, neighbourhoods, living through construction, the perceived opacity of current decision-making systems, and how, if given the power, the community would change things for the better - for themselves, their families, their neighbours - and in very simple and tangible ways.

When meaningfully included in conversations, residents contribute their unique and very personal experiences and points of view, and are deeply interested in the complex systems that affect their lives. The problems of today are more likely to be solved by listening and acting alongside communities.

Reframing our research process as an accessible, non-traditional consultation experience through craft workshops proved successful. It allowed engagement with seldom-heard residents and reconnected with those who had been disengaged due to consultation fatigue.

This approach produced in-depth research responses, while fostering community connections. Many residents expressed that they 'felt listened to', and connected with each other throughout the process. Informal neighbourhood relationships were strengthened through discussions of shared issues and by directly connecting participants in need of housing assistance with relevant council departments, and researchers were able to make introductions to expedite housing repairs as a positive externality.

ODAC, alongside our community partners, are genuinely excited to be part of building community power capacity, championing community voices, and building community power through arts and creativity across all opportunities for change-making in the future of Euston.

# CREDITS

The research project was delivered by Old Diorama Arts Centre.

- Creative Director & Chief Executive - Daniel Pitt
- Project Co-Producers and Artist/Researchers - Sarah Nicholl and Caitlin Strongarm
- Creative Producer: One Roof - Nell Hardy

Delivered in partnership with:

- [Fitzrovia Youth in Action](#) (Andre Schott, Ellie Rudd, Esta Orchard)
- [Hopscotch Women's Centre](#) (Isabelle Terrisson)
- [Somers Town Community Association](#) (Sarah Elie, Jodie Allen and Deepika Kanthavara Madhava)

Additional consultants and facilitators:

- Sem Lee, [OURI Labs](#)
- Jason Leman, Campaign Lead for [Neighbourhood Democracy, Citizen Network](#)
- Naomi Rubbra, [Footwork](#)

Documentation:

- Photography - [Alice Horsley](#)
- Illustration - Joshua Knowles
- Videography - Nick Charity

ODAC is thankful for the participation of these community groups and organisations:

- Participants of ODAC's [One Roof programme](#)
- Attendees of ODAC's [Neighbourhood Makeshop](#)
- Attendees and families of ODAC's [Remix Dance](#)
- [Third Age Project](#)
- [Esther Randall Court](#)
- [Cumberland Youth Club \(FYA\)](#)
- A Space for Us - [Somers Town People's Museum](#)
- [Community Champions Regent's Park](#) (delivered by FYA with ODAC)
- [Amphill TRA](#)

Special thanks to:

- Mary-Ann Lewis, Therese Gallagher, Cameron MacLeod, Paige Pryor, Simran O'Shea and the wider team at London Borough of Camden.
- Daisy Froud
- [Future Arts Centres](#)

And all the residents from the Euston community who generously contributed their personal experiences.

# ADDITIONAL MATERIALS (APPENDICES)

[Find the appendices here at odac.uk/housing-appendices.](https://odac.uk/housing-appendices)

These include:

- Easy-read Headline Report document
- Neighbourhood Connectors audio by Fitzrovia Youth in Action
- Neighbourhood Connectors research posters by Fitzrovia Youth in Action
- Short film roundup of Blueprints (filmed and edited by Nick Charity)
- Resident-made short film behind-the-scenes roundup of Blueprints (filmed and edited by Bahja Mohamed)
- Co-design Principles workshop with community organisation leaders report (prepared by OURI Labs)
- A Community Platform for Euston workshop (prepared by Citizen Network)
- Illustrative session notes from Blueprints Festival (by artist Josh Knowles)

Please contact Daniel Pitt on [daniel@olddiorama.com](mailto:daniel@olddiorama.com) if any of the links are broken or you need a different format.