

# MINUTES

**Meeting: Workspace Advisory Group**

**Date: Wednesday 25 November 2020**

**Time: 10:00 – 12:00**

**Place: MS Teams**

*Agendas and minutes of the meetings of the Workspace Advise Group are published at <https://www.london.gov.uk/node/37821> (except in those cases where information may be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act). Meetings are not held in public and are only open to those invited to attend by the Chair.*

**Members:**

Simon Pitkeathley (SP) (Co-Chair and LEAP member), Camden Town Unlimited  
Alexander Woolf, Romulus  
Alice Fung, Architecture 00  
Alison Partridge (AP), Capital Enterprise  
Charles Armstrong, The Trampery  
Jeannette Pritchard, Ugli  
~~John Spindler (JSP), Capital Enterprise~~  
Michael Davis (MD), JLL  
~~Nick Hartwright Projekt~~  
Nichole Herbert Wood (NW), Second Floor  
Olly Olsen (OO), The Office Group  
~~Sara Turnbull (ST) (Workwild)~~  
Shazia Mustafa (SM) Third Door

**Also in attendance:**

Stephen King (SK), London Councils  
Siobhan Jared (SJ), TFL

**GLA attendees:**

Jamie Izzard (JI),  
Maria Diaz Palomares (MDP),  
Rachel Roe (RR),  
Shumus Mattar (SM)

**Co-opted members:**

Jane Sartin (JSA), FlexSA  
Anne Malcolm (AM), LB Hackney (Co-opted member)

## **1. Apologies for Absence and Chair's announcements**

- 1.1. SE welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for their commitment, effort and energy during what has been an exceptionally difficult year.
- 1.2. Apologies were received from Nick Hartwright, John Spindler, Jeannette Prichard and Sara Turnbull,
- 1.3. SE welcomed the Deputy Mayor for Business Rajesh Agrawal to the meeting and explained that he will be updating Members on the work he and his team are doing around supporting London's Economic Recovery.

## **2. Declarations of Interests**

- 2.1. SE reminded members they need to declare any interests in any of the items set out on the agenda or any of the projects that are being delivered or discussed by the Group.
- 2.2. AP flagged that Capital Enterprise were responsible for delivering the Workspace Accreditation Pilot for the GLA.
- 2.3. AF declared that 00 have an active interest in the High Streets tender.

## **3. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

- 3.1. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

## **4. Welcome – Rajesh Agrawal Deputy Mayor for Business**

- 4.1. The Deputy Mayor welcomed Members to the last meeting of 2020 and thanked them for the commitment they have shown in helping the workspace sector navigate through the uncertainty caused by COVID-19.
- 4.2. The Deputy Mayor provided Members with an update on the work he and the Mayor have been doing to support businesses and to help the economy recover and grow during the pandemic. This included writing to the Government to identify key steps that they must take to help businesses survive whilst closed and in the long term.

They included:

- Extending the business rates holiday for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses, that was due to end in March 2021;
- Extending support for the self-employed;
- Better support for workers required to self-isolate and improved reimbursement for their employer;

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- Urgently delivering additional support for local authorities, businesses and our most vulnerable.

4.3. The Deputy Mayor explained that the London Recovery Board has been hearing from London leaders and citizens about their experiences of COVID-19 and have been working with councils, business and civil society to reshape London as a city that can prosper while remaining open, safe and attractive for Londoners, visitors and investors.

4.4. The Deputy Mayor highlighted that The London Recovery Taskforce which takes forward the work on London's recovery has identified **9 missions** based on what London residents and businesses have told us are their priorities: supporting jobs, high streets, making the city greener, healthier and more equal.

These are:

- A Green New Deal
- A Robust Safety Net
- High Streets for All
- A New Deal for Young People
- Helping Londoners into Good Work
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Digital Access for All
- Healthy Food, Healthy Weight
- Building Strong Communities

4.5. The Deputy Mayor shared with the Group the steps that London & Partners are taking to support the sector. This includes:

- A city-wide, industry-backed campaign, 'Because I'm a Londoner', to build consumer confidence and encourage consumer spending for London's businesses.
- Virtual activities for London's tourism businesses to help give them greater audience reach and keep them front of mind when visitors can fully return; and
- Adapting their international trade missions to run virtually, generating almost £18 million in GVA between April and June

4.6 The Deputy Mayor concluded by stating that there is a long road to recovery however he has no doubt in the spirit of Londoners who have come together to support one another at this difficult time.

## **5. Update on Modelling of Workspaces in High Streets**

- 5.1. AF introduced the item and explained this piece of work follows on from one of the WAG actions which is to produce an information pamphlet to provide guidance to help identify opportunities and enable delivery of flexible workspaces on High Streets in the context of COVID and pre COVID shifts in High Street retail units.
- 5.2. AF explained that the brief centres upon:
- Refurbishing existing retail units on high streets and shopping centres
  - Focuses mainly on outer London locations
  - Variety of flexible workspace – from artists' studios, maker spaces to desk-based workspace and kitchens
  - Provide guidance for LA's, developers, landowners on potential development and operational models
  - Feature micro case studies
- 5.3. AP explained that the brief will be summarised into four scenarios with the aim of making the pamphlet as tangible as possible:
- Conversion of large underutilised council assets;
  - Conversion of space in high street or retail park into creative workspaces, artist studios and/or maker spaces
  - Creation of a flexible workspace within shopping centre retail units
  - Conversion of a retail space, owned by private landowner, within the Central Activities Zone into flexible workspace.
- 5.4. AF summarised the emerging ideas and explained that they are focusing on where traditional commercial market models are not viable rather than replicating existing workspace provision.
- 5.5. AF took Members through the draft information pamphlet including layout, content, and geographical locations before talking Members in detail through each of the four scenarios.
- 5.6. AP enquired when the work is likely to complete and if it will be presented to LA's. AF confirmed that a draft will be shared with London Council Members before completion sometime in January 2021.
- 5.7. SJ stated that as a landlord it would be helpful to understand where the needs are i.e. where is it that the creative industries need their help, where is it that maker or educational spaces need their help

## **6. Update on the meeting of the Mayor with Landowners and Developers**

- 6.1. MD explained that a roundtable meeting between London's private sector developers and the Mayor took place on 19 November.

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- 6.2. The Agenda exclusively focused on responses to COVID. MD explained that the meeting ran very well, and it opened up a meaningful dialogue
- 6.3. MD expressed that the Mayor was in a listening mood and confirmed that the Mayor will be writing a series of letters to the Government to lobby getting London back work as well as reassuring the public that London Transport is very much safe and operational.
- 6.4. MD confirmed that there will be a follow up meeting in February 2021.
- 6.5. NHW stated that artists studios find it more useful to speak to smaller independent developers and enquired if a similar meeting could be arranged with them.
- 6.6. MDP reminded members that at the last meeting ST agreed to organise a meeting with the smaller landlords/ developers.

## **7. Move on Space Research**

- 7.1. AW updated Members on Move on Space and explained that there is now a draft research brief.
- 7.2. AW took members through a detailed presentation and explained that the desired outcome of the research is to understand the barriers facing scale –ups and SMEs in taking workspace however beforehand a definition of Move on Space is required.
- 7.3. AW explained that the research objectives are to explore the needs of companies and their employees, explore the pain points in their existing workspaces and test some new opportunity areas or concepts.
- 7.4. AW stated that the aim is to link this research to the High Streets research and the meeting with the landowners/developers.
- 7.5. NHW requested for the research to include workshops to reflect the creative industries. NHW also suggested for anything that is put out by the WAG that is related to meanwhile to be as sustainable as possible.

## **8. Workspace Accreditation – Update and discussion**

- 8.1 AP updated Members on the Accreditation Pilot and achievements to date. AP confirmed that 12 workspaces out of 12 have gone through the accreditation process with 9 spaces achieving accreditation and the other three receiving support to continue to the next phase. The pilot has helped some spaces develop new or strengthen existing services or processes provided to their tenants and local community. AP highlighted that more than 40 additional workspaces have expressed strong interest in participating in any future rollout of the scheme.
- 8.2 AP shared with Members of the group some learnings from the pilot and explained that as the pilot progressed it became evident that it is the space that should be accredited rather than the provider. AP stressed that in terms of local context there cannot be a pan London one size fits all accreditation. It is also essential for there to

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hand with payment plans to help customers reduce their debt liability and show their support for TfL.

- 9.5 SJ further explained that support will be based on looking at impact on turnover with customers providing letter from their accountants showing last 2 years turnover and this year so far. The revised support pack includes 100% credit for those asked to close due to lockdown.
- 9.6 MDP updated Members on the co-ordination of the sector action point and confirmed that at the last meeting it was agreed that the group would re examine some of the definitions put together for different types of spaces. This has now been completed and officers are working with the design team in terms of the actual graphic.
- 9.7 MDP also updated Members on the life sciences action point and explained that a roundtable meeting took place the notes of which have been circulated to the group. At the meeting it was agreed for an action plan to be created which is currently being finalised.

## **10. Any Other Business**

None

## **11. Dates of Future meetings**

27 January 2021