

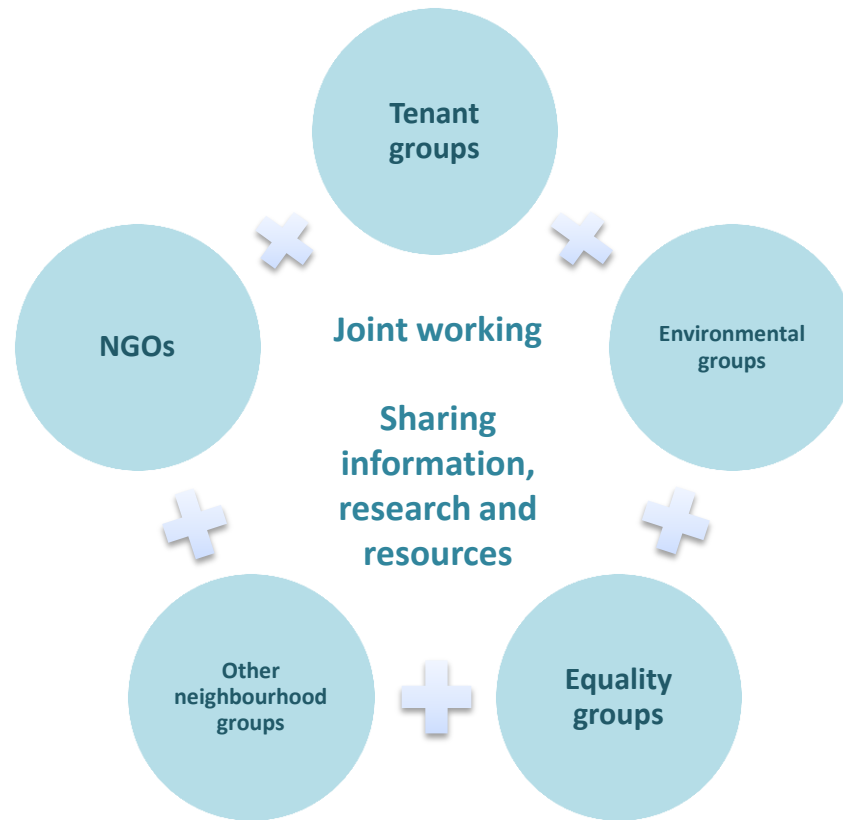
BUILDING A COMMUNITY BASED VOICE ACROSS THE CITY

Richard Lee
Coordinator of Just Space, London

February 25, 2014
Shipyard, Warsaw

Introducing Just Space

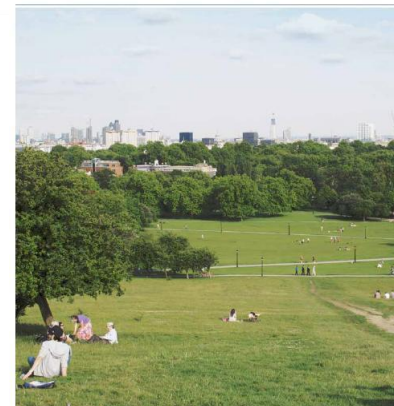
Just Space is a community led organisation operating across London since 2007, aiming to influence planning policy at city wide, local government and neighbourhood levels.



The City wide 20 Year Plan

Since 2000, the Mayor of London is responsible for:

- strategic planning
- deciding major planning applications
- allocating major regeneration areas
- setting targets for housing and climate change
- encouraging strategic vision and coordination between the 33 Boroughs
- producing the London Plan



THE LONDON PLAN

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR GREATER LONDON
JULY 2011

Process of participation in the London Plan



- In 2010, during the 3 months of public consultation on the London Plan, there was very limited engagement with the community sector from the Mayor's office
- Main planning documents are examined by an Independent Inspector, allowing debates among citizens, local authorities, the private sector and the Mayor
- Just Space organised conferences and workshops to encourage and support community groups to take part in the debates
- During the 35 days of examination in public, 60 community groups took part in the roundtable discussions
- Just Space secured a hot seat at the debates to allow a diversity of community voices to participate



What issues do we raise?

The Just Space
agenda:

Community rights

Equality

Social impact

Sustainability

- **Regeneration does not benefit existing low income communities and small businesses**
- **There is a lack of low cost rented which means that people's needs are not being met**
- **Challenging the current economic model which does not provide quality jobs or affordable work spaces and replaces industrial land with retail and residential development**
- **Challenging policies that make it harder to achieve targets of reduced carbon emissions and environmental justice**

The link with the local level



Neighbourhood level:

Raise awareness of the London Plan and monitor its implementation on the ground

Local authority level:

Support local groups to participate in local examinations and build planning expertise within the community

London wide level:

Ensure local effects of policies are positioned in a strategic context

How does Just Space engage people and what are the results?

Examples of activities from 2013:

- A one day conference for 80 representatives from tenant and other community groups involved in campaigning against demolition and displacement, which led to gathering case studies from some of these groups' experiences.
- A seminar bringing together 20 community representatives and 10 University researchers to discuss economic planning at a city wide level and how to support local groups in challenging the economic ideas behind major developments. This was followed by bi-monthly meetings on economy and planning.
- Just Space is now supporting community planning networks in 3 local government areas and 3 regeneration areas so as to encourage community groups to influence local government plans and develop their own agendas.

How does Just Space organise itself and make decisions?



- Just Space is a network with no executive or committee, organised horizontally
- Meetings are open to everyone from the community sector
- Decisions are taken by consensus, as opposed to voting
- Just Space seeks to overcome disagreements by discussion and compromise

What is the main benefit of a network like Just Space?

- **Community groups are widening their areas of interest**
- **Linking with other groups to feel stronger and better able to influence policies**
- **Professional knowledge combined with experiences of those directly affected**
- **Ability to work across the scales linking the local with the strategic**