



democratic
society

Welcome!

**Decision-makers as
movers and shakers,
communities as
moonrakers: comparing
two models**

30 September 2022

Friday 30 September 2022

Two case studies

Our experience and emerging impact

1. **Newham Councils' Democracy Commission** and its recommendation for a Permanent Citizens' Assembly
1. **London School of Economics Students' Union Democracy Review**, student mini-public to reimagine and strengthen SU democracy so it works better for everyone

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Online Citizens' Assembly

In-person Student Summit



Structure for today

Zoom in - under the microscope...

1. Commissioning process
2. Design process
3. Recruitment/Sortition
4. Quality of deliberation
5. Results and Impact

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...zooming out using 3 conference themes:

1. Political buy-in
2. Inclusive participation
3. Democracy in crisis



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1. Political buy-in



1. Newham Commissioning Process

Mayor led

- Newham Democracy Commission - an independent report, commissioned by the Mayor
- Mayor's directive, showboat, and political driver
- Vision of Newham as a beacon for Participatory Democracy
- Top down commitment to citizen engagement - 'radically rebalance the power relationship between councils and citizens, with residents placed firmly at the heart of decision making'.
- Rebuild trust and confidence in the council
- Funding for a permanent assembly, every 6 months, for residents to input into Newham decision making

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Welcome from Rokhsana Fiaz OBE Mayor of Newham



ROKHSANA FIAZ OBE
MAYOR OF NEWHAM



1. LSE SU Commissioning Process

Students' Union led

- Drive to review a democratic structure that better meets/represents the needs of students
- Funding and commitment came from staff and elected students reps, to a full

Democracy Review:

- ❑ Focus groups - International, BME, Masters, Commuting, PHD, LBGTQ+, Disabled students
- ❑ Online survey
- ❑ Maximised wider stakeholder engagement opportunities
- ❑ Deliberative Summit, representative of student population

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Students' Union-led Democracy Review



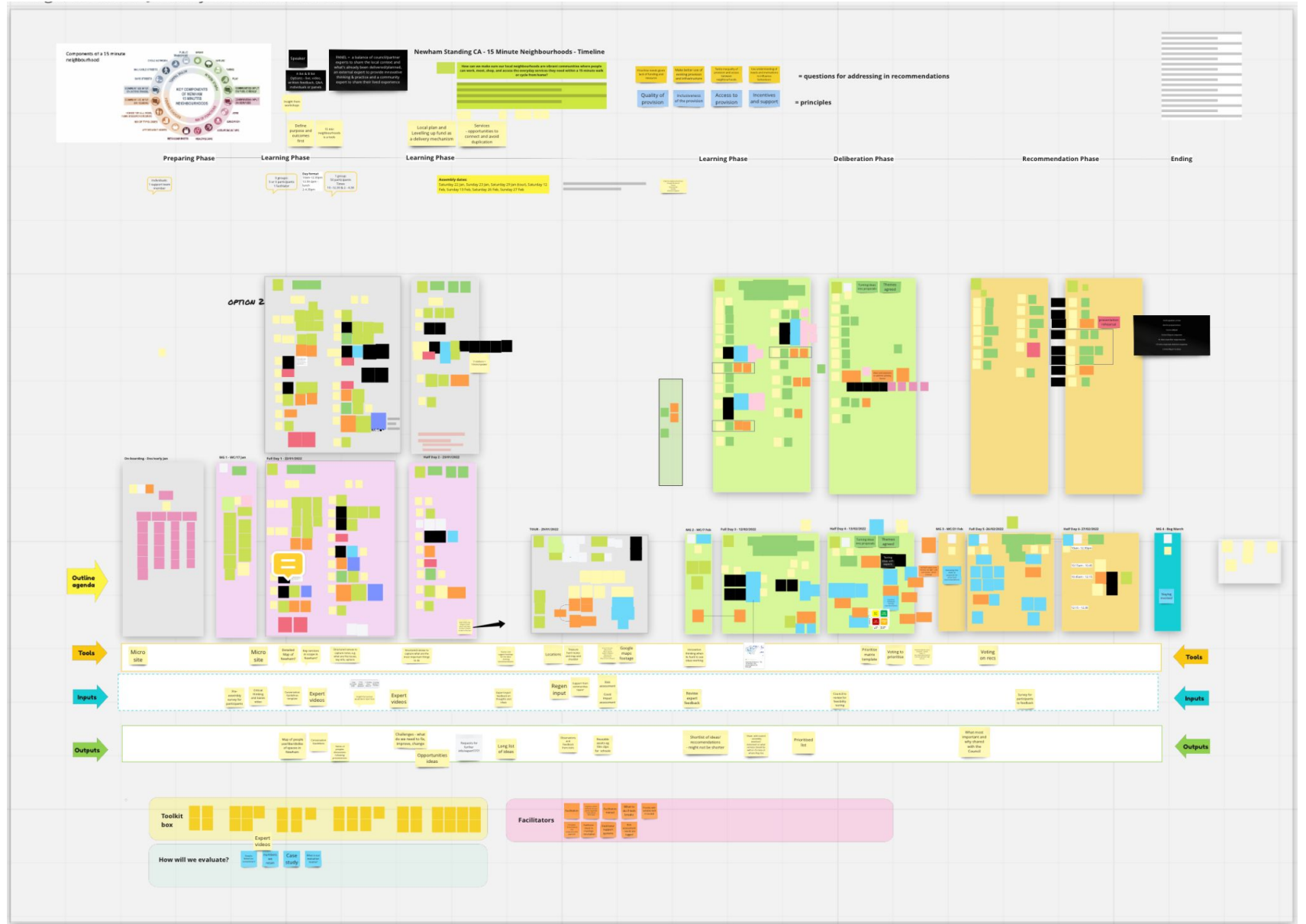
1. Newham Design Process

Council led agenda

- Assembly topics voted on by a small number of residents:
First: Greening the Borough
Second: 15 Minute Neighbourhoods
- One team approach to design process (Council/Demsoc)
- Strong model for linking recommendations into council thinking - pre-work with partners, cabinet members and council departments
- Lessons learned between assembly 1 and 2 - improved quality of design approach
eg Timescale comfortable

1. Newham Design Process

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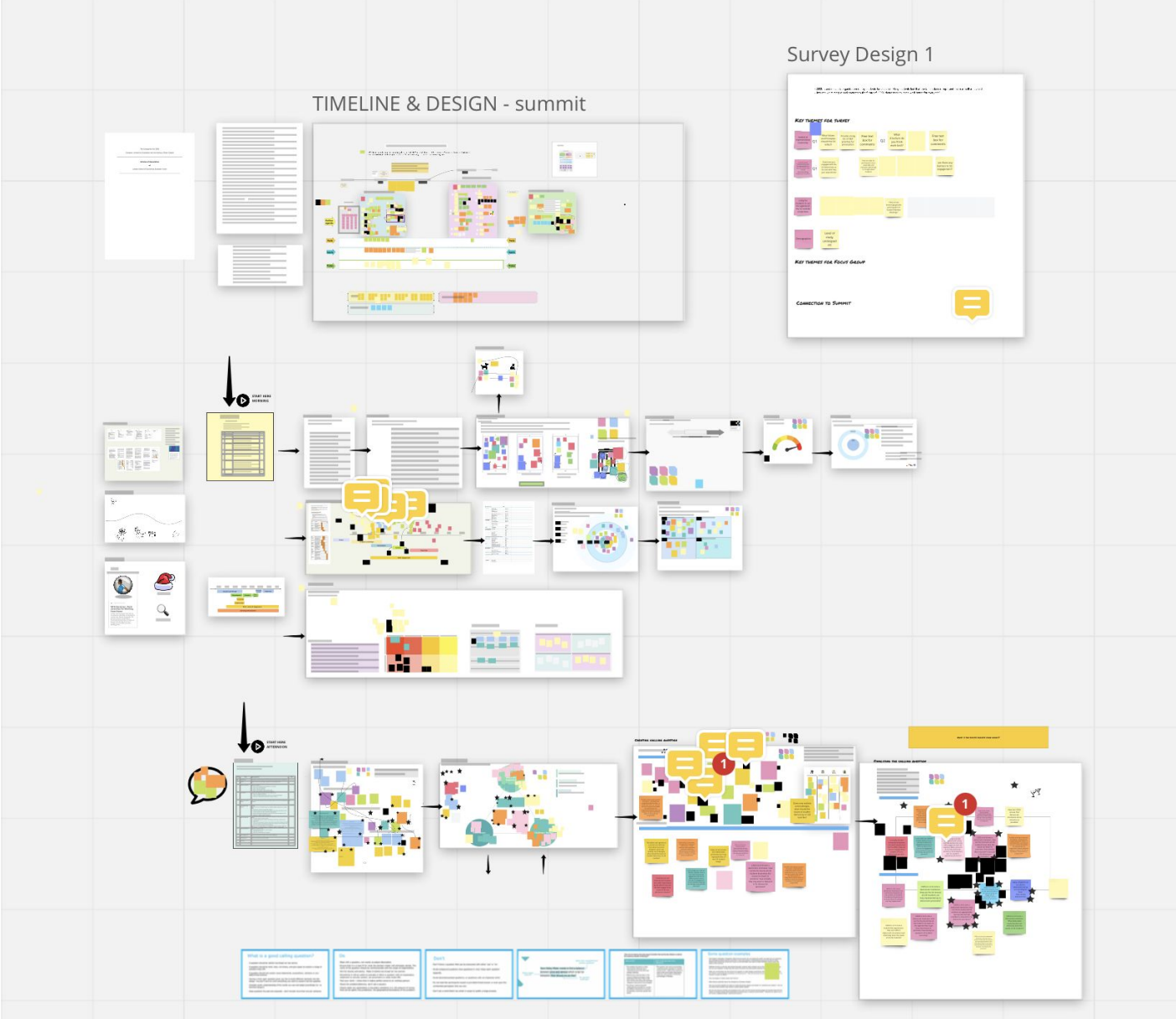
1. LSE SU Design Process

Big investment of time

- One team approach to design process (SU/Demsoc)
- Lots of SU team - lots of collaboration - lots of learning - lots of time!
- Lots of work on gaining wider buy in, involvement and information sharing
- Timescale very tight
- Strong model for linking recommendations into Students' Union structure
- Lessons learned added confidence and capacity to the SU body

1. LSE SU Design Process

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2. Inclusive participation



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2. Newham Recruitment

Citizens' Assembly - 50 residents online

- Postal method-invitations to 10,000 randomly selected addresses
- Standard web-form or freephone to sign up
- Fairly standard (UK) demographic targets, not knowing the topics
 - Gender, age, ethnicity, disability, occupation, geography
 - Only significantly skewed on occupation
- High level of diverse resident responses and engagement
- Two recruitment rounds - no second invitation process needed
- 2nd round of Assembly - 50/50 veterans and newbies

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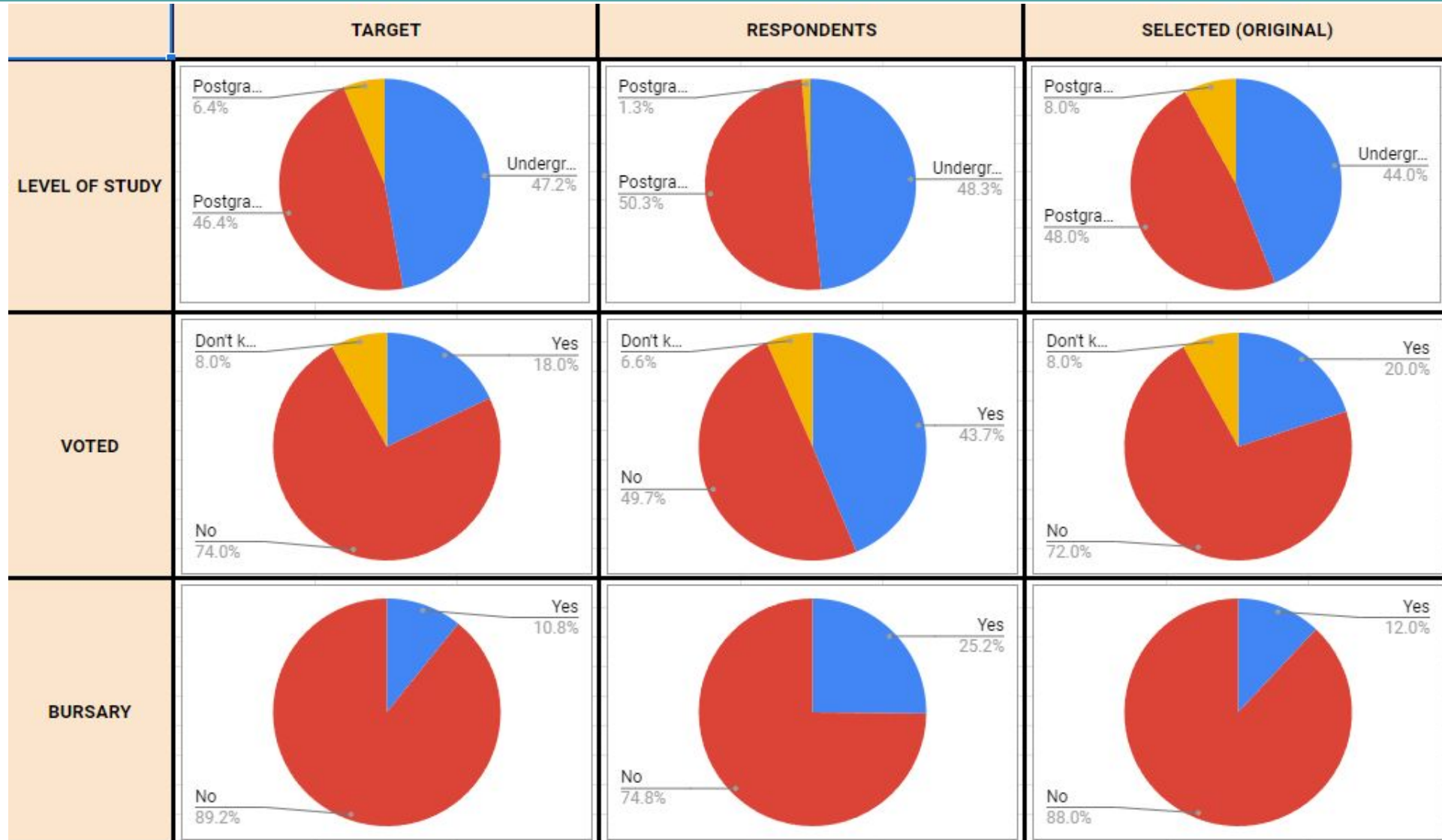
2. LSE SU Recruitment

Democracy Summit - 24 students in-person

- Email invitations to 4,000 randomly selected addresses on student list
- Online form to sign up
- Specific demographic targets - student population
 - Gender, ethnicity, disability, fee status, level of study, voted, bursary
 - Interesting skewing on voting and bursary, also postgrads
- 3.8% resident responses and engagement...normal for postal invites but no comparison email data

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LSE Pies!



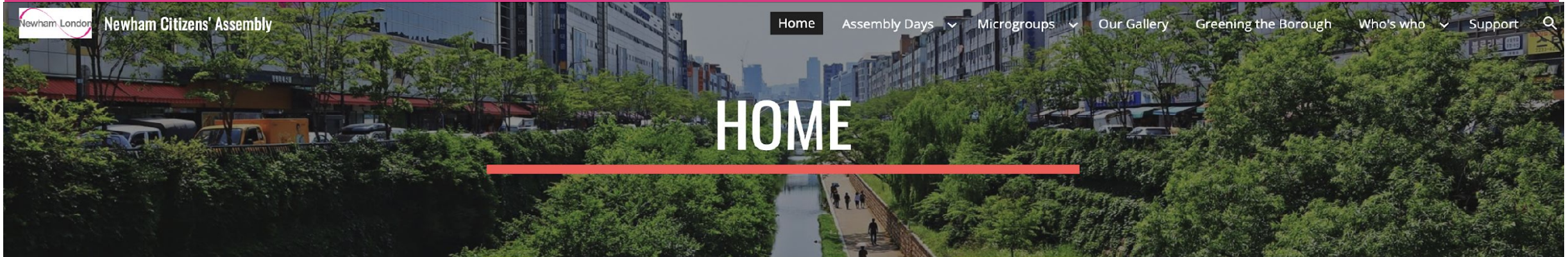
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2. Newham Quality of Deliberation

Council sourced experts

- Assembly expert input overload! Council's mates
- Not enough time for deliberation in assembly days
- Overall concept very council focussed - residents spent time trying to understand it rather than properly deliberate
- Deliberation supported with resources and film clips on an assembly microsite
- An optional assembly member walking tour of neighbourhoods - surprisingly well attended - and brought fresh learning and insight into the learning process
- Assembly member micro-groups for improved access and quality of engagement

Your Microsite – a one stop shop



WELCOME

Welcome and thank you so much for participating in the Newham Permanent Citizens' Assembly!

INTRODUCTION

Newham's residents have decided that '15 minute Neighbourhoods' is the issue they want England's second permanent Citizens' Assembly to discuss this winter.

You have been invited and selected to join this Assembly to discuss and recommend ways the Council should help make Newham a better, happier and healthier place to live. This second Citizens' Assembly will therefore examine how we can develop 15 minute neighbourhoods in the borough.

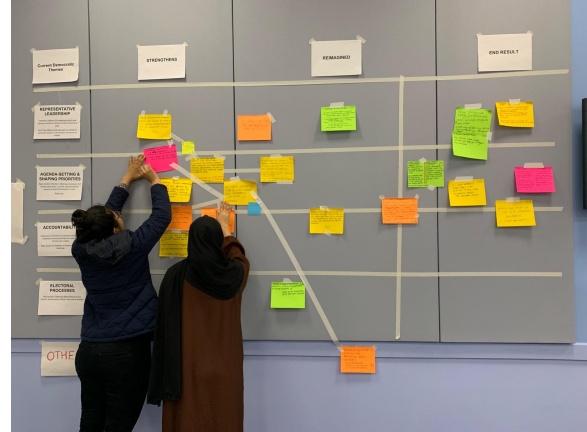
Your Big Question is;

How can we make sure that our local neighbourhoods are vibrant communities where people can work, meet, shop and access the everyday services they need within a 15 minute walk or cycle from home?

2. LSE SU Quality of Deliberation

Wot, no experts?!

- SU found it hard to source experts
- A very last minute scramble to pull focus group and survey evidence together
- Experts = testing partners
- Students enjoyed in-person deliberation and participatory activities
- Three sessions, when four would give more space
- The final session on recommendations stretched ambition





3. Democracy in crisis



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3. Newham Results & Impact

What is the impact?

- Strong model for linking recommendations into council thinking - pre-work with partners, cabinet members and council departments
- Lessons learned between assembly 1 and 2 - improved quality of design approach
- Citizen-led engagement model - recruitment of assembly 2 advised by assembly 1
- Processing recommendations into actions that achieve outcomes takes time
- Results between assembly 1 and 2 not very visible - compromises legitimacy of process council reputation
- Goes into 'a slow black hole'

3. Newham Results & Impact

[Home](#) > [Latest news](#) > People power in action - Newham Citizens' Assembly looks at 15 Minute Neighbourhoods

People power in action - Newham Citizens' Assembly looks at 15 Minute Neighbourhoods

Newham's permanent Citizens' Assembly will meet again this weekend (*Saturday 22 January and Sunday 23 January*) as part of the Council's commitment to give power to the people, by expanding democracy through this innovative new way for residents to help shape policies which matter to them.

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Fifty residents from across the borough will take part in this second permanent Assembly, which will focus on the issue of '15 Minute Neighbourhoods', a topic chosen by residents themselves.

Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz OBE said: "I am very much looking forward to hearing from this, the next session of our Citizens' Assembly, which will be another important opportunity for people in Newham to have a voice on issues which matter to them. I will be excited to hear the ideas that emerge on how we can achieve '15 minute neighbourhoods' and shape the places we live in ways which can really improve our lives."

The '15 minute neighbourhood' concept has been adopted by cities across the world, including Paris, Lagos, Shanghai, Melbourne and Bogota. In essence, the idea is to create more liveable and sustainable neighbourhoods in which residents can access all of their day-to-day needs within a 15-minute walk or cycle of their home.

Mayor Fiaz said: "The issue Assembly participants will be discussing comes at a really important time, and this topic goes to the heart of the vision we have for Newham. We have embraced this model of place making, which is about making our local areas responsive to the people and places which exist, and looking at a variety of needs in what is often a complex and challenging urban environment."

"I am delighted that we have such an impressive range of experts coming to talk to us and share views with the Citizens' Assembly, including from Paris, a city from which we have taken inspiration given their pioneering work on 15 minute neighbourhoods. This is about building a thriving, sustainable borough where all residents are served by local centres which meet their needs."

3. LSE SU Results & Impact

Impact city!

- Participant experience of the review process influenced the recommendations: new structure of cycle of student Scrutiny Board and Chamber of Deliberation
- Results highly visible, and passed on to new students and student sabbatical officers
- Student ownership of results is visible, strengthening a culture of student-led engagement and decision making
- Recommendations can be actioned more easily, by smaller group of actors
- SU moves from commissioner to agents of change

3. LSE SU Results & Impact



This is our opportunity to engage in an innovative, student-led process to create system change that works in the interest of our biggest priority, students!

WHAT IS THE DEMOCRACY REVIEW?

The LSESU Democracy Review is an in-depth evaluation and reform of the SU's democratic structure. We know it is not working as efficiently and effectively as it could be for all LSE students.

We have partnered with [DemSoc](#), an international non-profit organisation that has previously worked on democracy reviews at Greenwich and Exeter Universities Students' Unions, to undergo this endeavour.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

We have engaged in student surveys and focus groups to collect detailed student feedback on what students need from the SU democratic structure going forward.

We held a Democracy Summit where a representative body of 24 students participated in three deliberative sessions to learn about democracy and make recommendations to the SU. You can find the full report on the Summit and their recommendations [here](#).

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Now, we will be working on implementing the changes! We are trying to bring as much of it as possible in for 2022/23, and everything will be fully in place for the year 2023/24.

Independent academics will be conducting research and evaluation of the entire LSESU Democracy Review process.

SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The document [linked here](#) provides a list of the Democracy Summit recommendations from participants along with data on the recommendation's level of support from participants.

BRIEFING

The document [linked here](#) provides a high-level overview of the Democracy Review for someone who may not yet know what we are trying to do!

TENDER

The document [linked here](#) was used to enlist organisations with expertise in developing democratic structures to work with the SU on this initiative!

EXPLORE THIS SECTION:

Democracy Summit



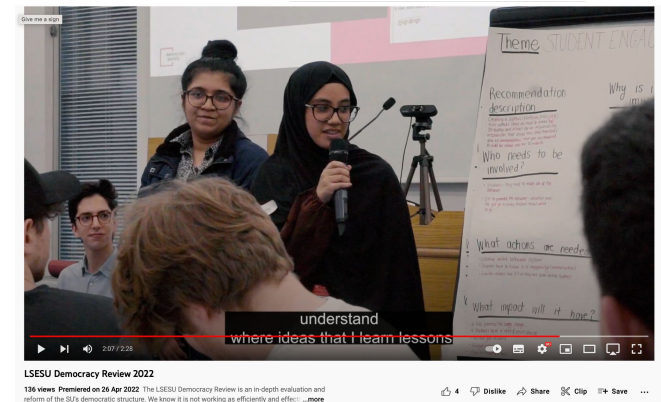
Research



Resources and Documents



Timeline



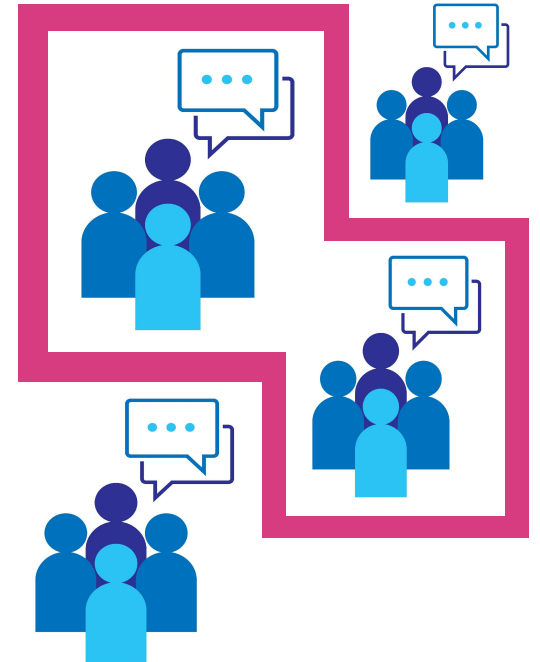
We put the new democratic structure up to an all student vote where it was approved by students! And, the Trustee Board reviewed the passed motion and approved it as well. **This means, the Union now officially has a new democratic structure!** You can find our new byelaws [here](#).



Final thoughts

What will you take away from this?

Any tensions you still need to resolve?





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THANK YOU