

London Festival of Architecture 2025

- **Yanni Pitsillides**, Area Regeneration Manager, London Borough of Newham
- **Clare Neilson**, Project Manager at Populo Living
- **Jan Kattein**, Director Jan Kattein Architects
- **Jen Storan**, Projects Director, Meanwhile Space
- **Hakan Elbir**, CEO of Dialogue Hub
- **Adeel**, A Carpenters Estate resident



LFA London Festival of Architecture

In Dialogue: Creating Transformative Meanwhile Projects at the Carpenters

June 26th 4pm-5:30pm

Find out what 'good' looks like in Meanwhile Projects. Join Populo Living for a lively talk and tour exploring how Meanwhile Projects and community voices are shaping a new legacy for the estate.

Led by architect Jan Kattein, with guest speakers and a tour ending at the Dialogue Express Cafe - a repurposed train carriage creating training opportunities for Deaf and hard-of-hearing baristas.

Sign up via [eventbrite](#).

Newham – the local authority context

Yanni Pitsillides, Area Regeneration Manager, London Borough of Newham



The work at the Carpenters aligns with the Council's major plans, policies, and priorities.

Newham's Community Wealth Building Agenda

- Ensures every investment benefits Newham residents directly.
- Procurement prioritises businesses based in Newham.
- Champions the London Living Wage and holding private sector partners accountable
- Embeds fairness and opportunity into the local economy.
- For place-based regeneration this means co-design with residents, supporting local businesses and organisations.
- Carpenters is an example of this in application in practice.



Newham – a policy framework

The Corporate Plan

- Sets out eight priorities including new homes, with ambitious targets for inclusive economy, great neighbourhoods, youth opportunities, and the environment.
- Embodied on the Carpenters Estate.
- Supported by two key culture and climate strategies.
- **Newham's Cultural Strategy** 15 years to unlock the borough's creative potential.
- **Just Transition Plan** commits the borough to becoming net zero by 2045, and the Council's operations carbon zero by 2030.
- These are clearly embodied on the Carpenters Estate.

Right: The Steel Warriors gym made from reclaimed knives removed from London's streets



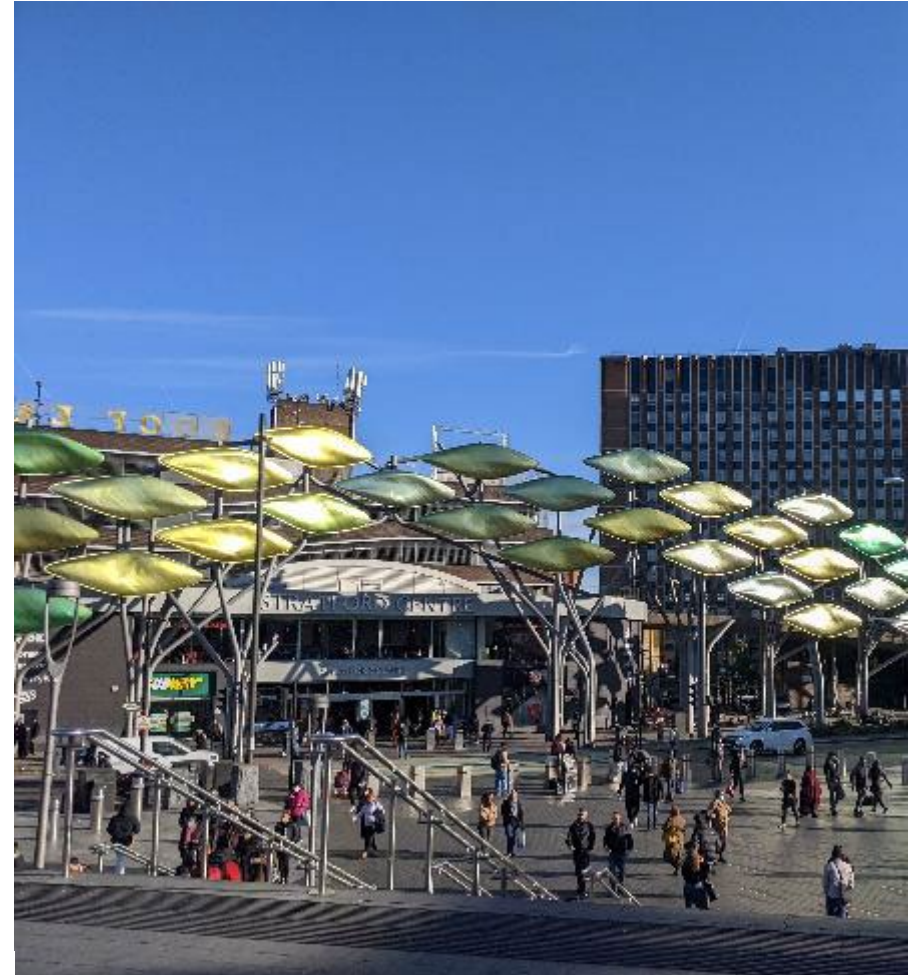
Newham – realising potential

STRATFORD AND BEYOND

- Stratford is dynamic and fast growing, and the station is one of the busiest in the UK. The council seeks to redevelop and boost capacity.
- The neighbouring town centre and the Stratford Centre has limited ability to be green, walkable, and welcoming due to 1960s infrastructure.
- The **Stratford Vision** is a long-term collaborative framework to guide development over the next 15 years.

NEIGHBOURHOOD INVESTMENT

- 2022 – Newham received £40 million central government funding for Neighbourhood Investment.
- Includes 15-minute neighbourhood interventions, retrofitting buildings for community and cultural uses, and improving connectivity.
- The scale and ambition of these projects is very similar to what's happening here at Carpenters.



Right: The Stratford Centre

Populo Living – creating a Meanwhile strategy

Clare Neilson, Project Manager at Populo Living



- Populo Living is Newham's wholly-owned housing company, dedicated to creating high-quality, affordable homes for the people of the borough.
- Delivered 754 homes, including an additional 77 flat later living facility managed by the council.
- Populo manages 795 homes across Newham, with 541 private rented sector (PRS) properties and 251 at London Affordable Rent (LAR).
- It is delivering the Carpenters Estate Regeneration on behalf of Newham, with 2,300 homes (50% affordable).



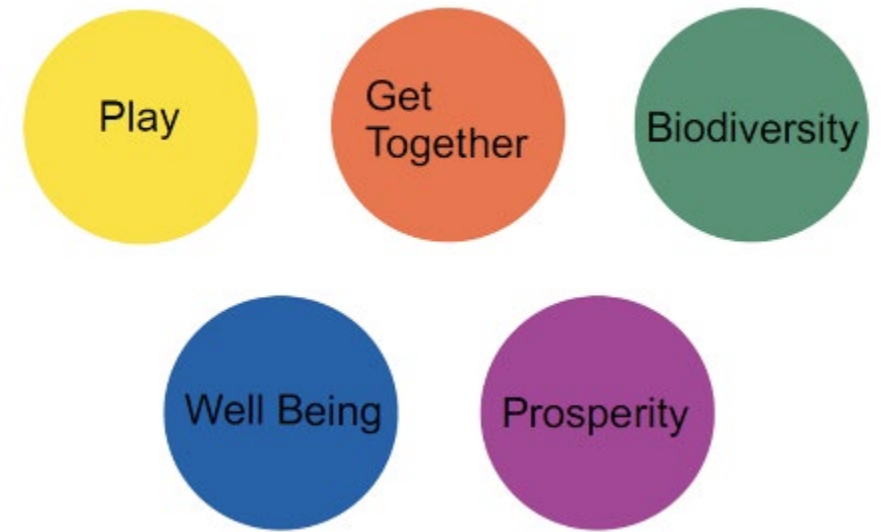
Right: The Didsbury in East Ham

Creating a Meanwhile strategy

Populo created a Meanwhile projects strategy to ensure projects had long-term value. Projects had to reflect resident feedback, deliver social value and fit with the vision of legacy.

What the strategy set out to achieve:

- To involve residents and give them a taste of what's to come.
- To improve the public realm and repurpose under utilised space.
- To improve safety through increased footfall and natural surveillance.
- To re-provide demolished space as part of the regeneration.
- To provide affordable, flexible workspaces for Newham entrepreneurs.
- To revive and improve the image of the estate.



What residents wanted the projects to deliver

Developing the Meanwhile framework

1. Design Team Appointment

Landscape Architect, Planning Consultant, Cost Consultant and Meanwhile Operator led the process

2. Understand Existing Context

Identify existing meanwhile projects and initiatives on Carpenters and the site's constraints and opportunities

3. Respond

Five themes of Meanwhile Projects identified; A matrix of 15 ideas were developed to respond to these 5 themes

4. Community Engagement

3 x residents engagement events were held to discuss the 5 themes and the 15 ideas

7. Delivery Timeline

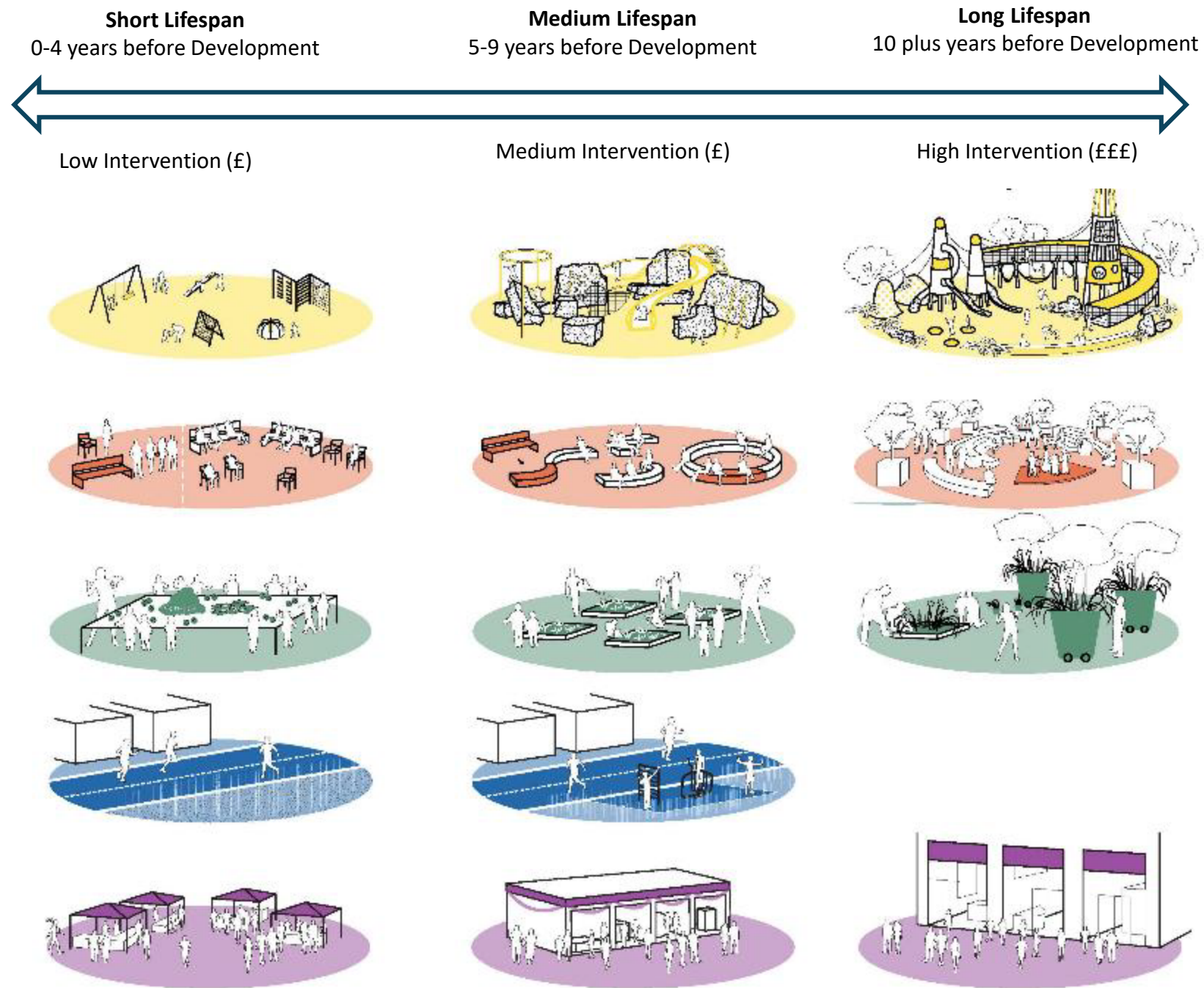
A phasing plan of the projects was drawn based on the logistics of the delivery timeline of the Carpenters Masterplan, and maximize the opportunities to reuse the meanwhile installations

6. Key Projects

3 key projects & connecting projects were identified, and concepts were drawn up following the evaluation process

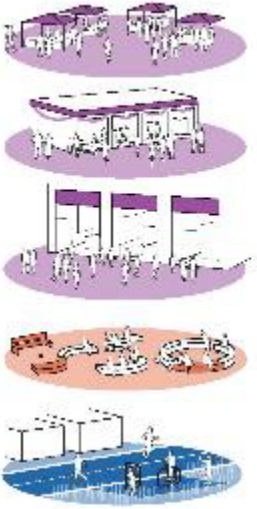
5. Evaluation Assessment

Following resident feedback, an evaluation assessment measured the deliverability and value of the 15 ideas.



Three Key Projects + Additional Connecting Projects

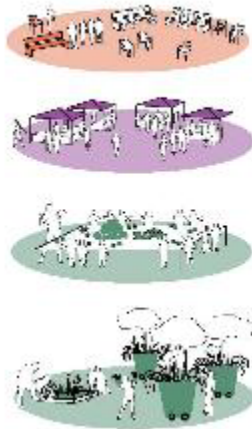
TMO Site



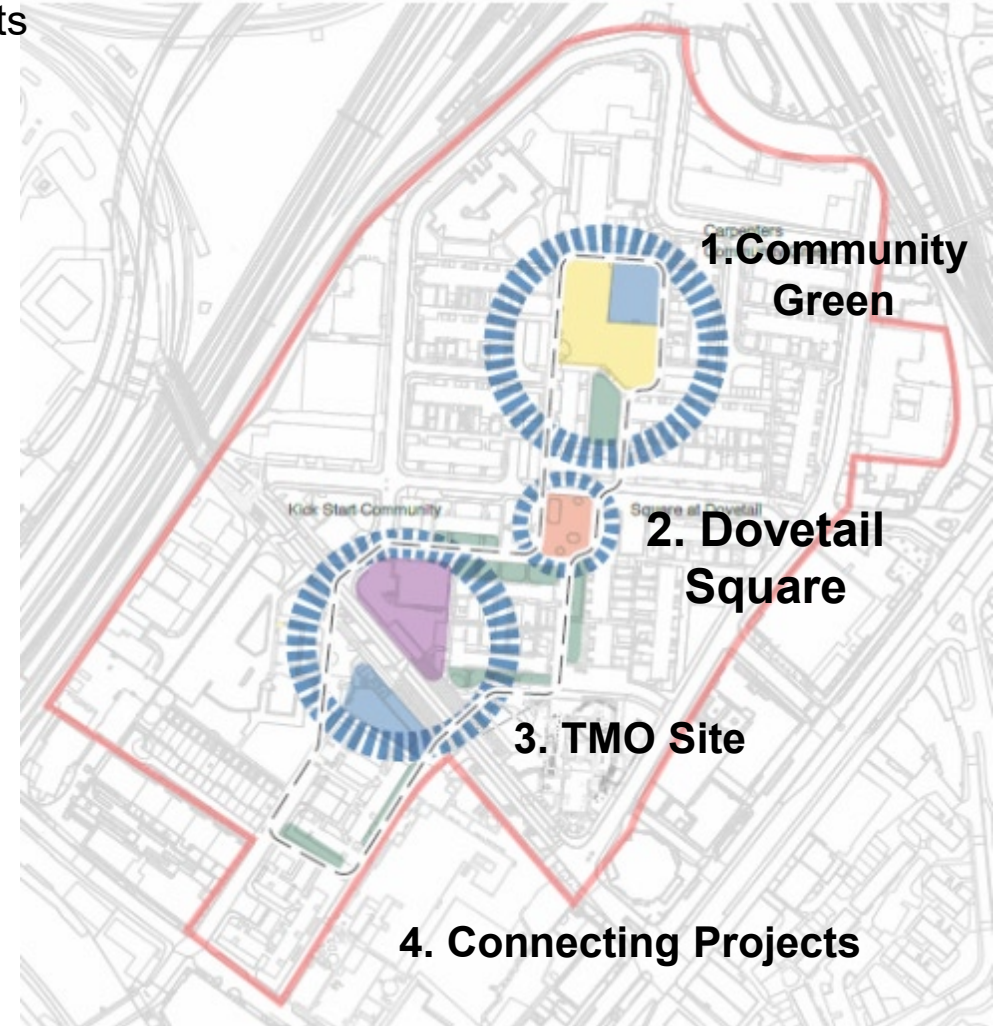
Community Green



Dovetail Square



Connecting Projects



Prosperity

Get
Together

Play

Well Being

Biodiversity

Jan Kattein Architects – interpreting the ambition

Jan Kattein, Director and Founder of Jan Kattein Architects

- Most ambitious housing program in generations – 1.5m new homes in 5 years = 300k homes per year.
- 56% of residential properties need an environmental upgrade = 1.4m homes annually.
- London has 200 major estate regenerations underway.

No matter how sustainable + high quality final outcome = lives of millions of families implicated.

- Severance of social networks caused by decants + re-housing.
- Loss of open space to construction.
- Loss of local services + amenities, shops, workspaces, community halls.
- Environmental Impact on construction.

Large estate regeneration = 10 years+ to implement.

That's more than ½ of a child's life or 12% of an average adult's life spent on a constr. Site.

Meanwhile uses

- Create continuity for residents/mitigate impact of construction
- trial new uses + governance models
- incubate businesses
- creates jobs + skills
- establish a unique identity
- fosters exchange between exstg. + new communities

This contributes to placemaking objectives to benefit legacy development with the potential of many of the social structures, functions and even design features to manifest in GF, streets + squares

JKA – interpreting the ambition

Carpenters Tenant Management Office (TMO)

- workspace (16x)
- office space (Populo)
- community space
- Three event yards
- Café

About to start on site: 10- 12 months.

Dialogue Hub

- Cafe in a repurposed train carriage.
- Outside seating addressing community garden



Above: Design for the TMO on Carpenters

JKA – interpreting the ambition

Sustainability

- with 40% of carbon from construction, reduction of embodied carbon is absolutely fundamental for meanwhile
- build less = eliminate circulation, share spaces
- materials: two methods, either de-mount or re-use
- the former projects carbon saving into future, the latter makes the carbon savings now
- at Carpenters, we are using the latter strategy, re-using buildings, re-using materials + re-using structures (train carriages)



Above: the concept for the train carriage cafe

JKA – demonstrating the benefits

- Blue House Yard: what started as 4 year project has now been running for 8 years and counting, but greatest success: Haringey have gained comprehensive understanding of
- Skip Garden Kings Cross, move to BL + now Global Gen = permanent site on 999 year lease; story garden will have to close in autumn = one of buildings will be taken down and brought to Carpenters.



Above: Blue House Yard, Below: Skip Garden

JKA – the benefits

Skills:

Some meanwhile projects = self-build.

- At the **Paper Garden** in Canada Water 3,000 volunteers built an educational building with 60% natural + reclaimed materials
- This meant that 3,000 people gained skills working with natural and reclaimed materials and act as ambassadors for the cause.
- **Triangle Ecology Garden** in Kings Cross, we optimised how we deliver these projects, paid national building apprentices, contractors, a steering group, and used natural materials from around London + SE.
- Funding from the Heritage Lottery Funding for skills associated with vernacular technologies

<https://jankattein.com/projects/>



Above: Paper Garden, Below: Triangle Ecology Garden



Meanwhile Space – strategy first

Jen Storan, Project Director, Meanwhile Space

Meanwhile Space were the consultants on the Carpenters Estate meanwhile use programme.

- Phased estate redevelopment schemes – the opportunities and need for temporary, adaptive interventions
- Not whether to do meanwhile use, but how to act in the meanwhile well
- Setting precedents – strategic approach, environmental sustainability, community voices



Meanwhile Space – creating local opportunities

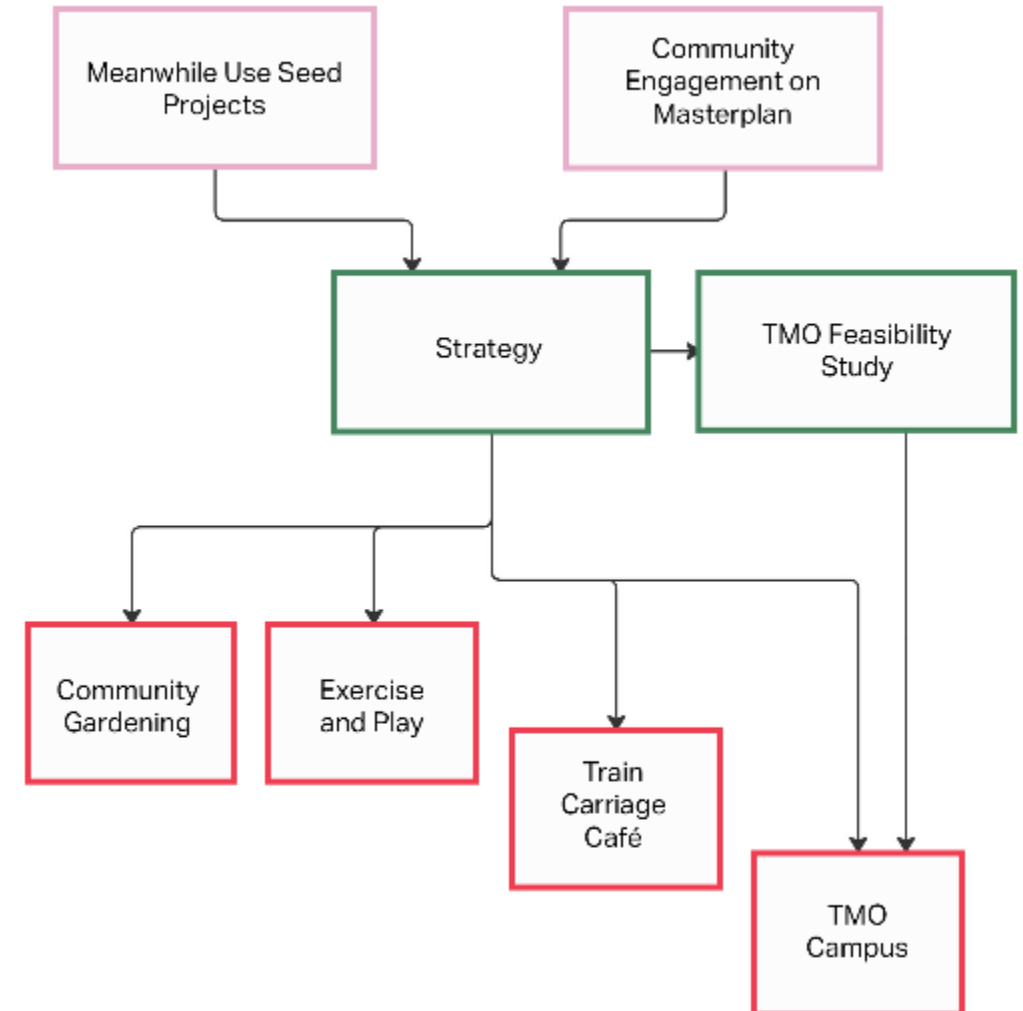
The value of a strategic approach

Delivery

- Approach to engagement is incremental and coordinated, not fragmented and demanding
- Assesses best possible mix of projects across time and space of masterplan
- Coordinated approach to planning and delivery
- Step-by step approach to test feasibility and viability and allow ideas to evolve

On the ground

- Projects serve different functions and users but are complementary
- Creates a cohesive sense of identity at a time when construction works can make a place feel fragmented
- Connects masterplan and projects, allowing team to keep sight of objectives while delivering flexibly
- Residents are part of a step-by-step change within wider processes of transformation



Meanwhile Space – creating local opportunities

Community voices

- Meanwhile use projects serve practical functions for local people, but are also an expression of community voices
- Strategic approach rationalizes engagement
- Processes of engaging-through-doing
- Having a community hub, like the Dovetail, helps support an embedded approach
- Step-by-step approach to allow for flexibility and gradual building of community trust and ownership
- More immediate realization of community ambition than conventional development – sense of agency
- Multiple projects = multiple different opportunities for involvement
- Physical interventions as trellis for social infrastructure

Circular Economy

- Meanwhile use as a throwaway form of architecture vs a reusing, repurposing approach
- Offers Carbon savings + opportunities for cocreation
- Threads of continuity and familiarity
- Stories told through the landscape (eg Steel Warriors, gardens and local collaboration)



Creating a legacy

Immediate

- Places to connect, work, play, learn, exercise
- Evidence of community agency

Future

- Meanwhile use is an ongoing process rather than a finished product
- How the space is inhabited, owned and used as a platform
- The patterns, connections and social infrastructures that emerge
- How these grow in place as the masterplan is built out
- Continued role of Populo Living, as a project member in dialogue with space and people

Demonstrator project

- Showcase of the potential of meanwhile use with large estate regeneration schemes
- Meanwhile Use and the Carpenters Estate downloadable from Populo Living news site

<https://www.meanwhitespace.com/>

Above: Read the report *Meanwhile Use and the Carpenters Estate*

Dialogue Hub – creating local opportunities

Hakan Elbir, CEO of Dialogue Hub



Amplifying Voices through Dialogue

- Deaf-led social enterprise
- Dialogue Cafe and Dialogue Express Cafe
- Mission: 'Empathy through encounter'

The LFA 2025 Theme: 'Voices'

What does 'Voices' mean to Dialogue Hub?

- Inclusion, access, participation
- Making the deaf community's voice visible



“Here in Dialogue Cafe I can be in touch with my true self, using sign language more, not only with my family, being appreciated what I have, stay active, and develop professionally.” **Kua**

Dialogue Hub

Dialogue Hub's Approach – Learning Through Encounter

- Experiential learning > Awareness > Empathy
- Visitor journey in the café
- Sign language, real conversations, role reversals

Benefits for Partners

- Social impact: Inclusion of Deaf and hard-of-hearing Londoners
- Experiential: Truly engaging festival content
- Unique: One-of-a-kind interaction through sign language and Deaf culture
- Visibility: Media, PR, and cross-promotion opportunities

Dialogue Cafe @Royal Docks / UEL

- Engagement resulted in community reach, BSL workshop attendance

The Guardian



INews



Media Coverages

Secret London



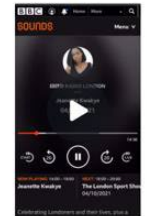
Lucy Edwards



Jazzy Whips



BBC Radio



Dialogue Hub

Carpenters Dialogue Express Café: Community Benefits

- Located near Carpenters Estate and Newham, serving as a local gathering point
- Employs and empowers Deaf residents from the borough
- Offers free BSL taster sessions and community events
- Reduces social isolation and fosters inter-community understanding
- Encourages young people and families to engage with Deaf culture
- Supports local regeneration and inclusive placemaking

<https://dialoguehub.co.uk/>



Adeel – a resident's perspective

First hand insight from an involved resident

Scan the QR codes to listen.



Adeel: The Meanwhile Projects and legacy



Adeel: Supporting local community via Meanwhile