

MAPPING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACROSS LONDON CASE STUDY PACK

Commissioned by the Greater London Authority
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TSIP

THE
SOCIAL
INNOVATION
PARTNERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document

In recent years, the need for community engagement, and the impact it can have when done meaningfully, has been increasingly apparent. The Greater London Authority's Community Engagement team commissioned The Social Innovation Partnership (TSIP) to research and map community engagement across London. The aim of this research is to explore more collaborative and innovative community engagement methods for practising more shared decision making between community members and policymakers. This research was carried out between March 2023 – September 2023.

As part of our research, we reached out to 10 organisations across London, this included local councils, charities, and community organisations. We sought to understand what community engagement looked like for them, and produced a series of case studies that explore the successes, challenges and lessons learned, and set out the key insights for policymakers. Please use the index on the next page to navigate through the document.

The sentiments in the case studies, reflect the perspective of interviewees. Due to time limitations, we were not able to seek reflections of other stakeholders involved in projects when researching and writing up these case studies.

Additional resources are available upon request

Contact community.engagement@london.gov.uk for your copy.

Report Read our full report for a detailed understanding of the research behind the key insights presented in this document.

Toolkit Get practical recommendations on how to improve community engagement across the board using our toolkit for effective community engagement.

Key Insights Document Learn more about the key findings of our research in this easily digestible summary document.

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1 Camden Council and Camden Giving – collaboration to enable effective community engagement

Camden Giving is a charitable foundation committed to connecting resources and support to local projects and initiatives through an innovative participatory grant-making approach. TSIP spoke with Gillian Marston, Executive Director of Supporting Communities within Camden Council, and Natasha Friend, Director of Camden Giving to gain insights into successful engagement practices in the borough. Through partnership with local community organisations Camden Council were able to move away from traditional engagement methods which did not fully meet the needs of the community to more innovative inclusive engagement practices.

“I think there is a cultural commitment to community power across the whole of the council that extends beyond what they do with us at Camden Giving”.

Engagement Successes

An open and collaborative approach to fostering relationships in Camden has enhanced mutual trust within the borough, strengthening the bond between community members and the council. Furthermore, it has also instilled a deeper sense of trust within council's staff towards community assets, expertise, and unique value derived from lived experience. This was pioneered using a top-down approach led by Council Leader Georgia Gould. Since appointment, she has played a pivotal role in shaping the borough's policies and driving community initiatives. This has been achieved through transforming conventional hierarchies and centralised power structures into a vision that prioritises resident investment and agency. A top-down and bottom-up approach to citizen empowerment has been felt throughout Camden council from senior leadership to officers.

“We don't just do one bit of participation. It's a constant. In all my previous council roles, I've never worked in a council that is so driven by communities”.

Citizen Assemblies represent just one departure from traditional engagement. These serve as inclusive forums where residents who have been selected through sortition convene to discuss and offer input on significant matters. This fosters an extensive and diverse public role in decision-making. Several assemblies have been held, with the initial session focussed on the climate emergency, leading to the formulation of the council's action plan. Subsequent meetings have been convened to assess progress, introduce fresh ideas, and maintain accountability. The Council also recruits dozens of Community Engagers from estates across the borough to further their commitment to accountability and to hear from voices that aren't often captured by traditional structured approaches.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Gillian and Natasha both commented on Camden council's openness to experimentation, collaboration, and power-sharing as a key success of engagement. They maintained that an appetite for risk was key to introducing innovative approaches in the borough. Through this, a commitment to the community as experts particularly around formulation of citizen assemblies was positioned as a key lesson to take onboard.

Insights for policymakers

Creating an open space for mutual feedback between local community organisations and the local authority is key to ensuring successful engagement. Communities and officers should feel safe to acknowledge challenges and understand that feedback will be taken onboard and actioned where possible. This can usher in new relationship dynamics between communities and the local authority that is kinder, more compassionate, and collaborative.

2 Kingston Society- Pilot Urban Room: Open Frame in Kingston upon Thames

The Kingston Society is a civic society representing the interests of community members in the borough of Kingston upon Thames. In January 2023, the Society came together with partners (The North Kingston Neighbourhood Forum, and New Malden's and Chessington's District Residents' Associations) to work with Kingston Council to pilot the borough's first Urban Room initiative. This was known as Open Frame and provided residents with a neutral space to come together and discuss the borough's Local Plan. TSIP spoke with the Kingston Society's lead for the project, Peter Karpinski, to learn more about the urban room initiative and how it served as a useful tool for engaging the community.

Engagement Successes

The proposed space required some changes before it could serve as an Urban Room. This presented a challenge as it is a Grade II* Listed Building therefore only minimal infrastructural changes were possible. To address this, Kingston Council worked with architecture undergraduate and postgraduate students from Kingston University to design an Urban Room project that ensured the space in the building would be suitable. Over 150 students competed in 21 teams to come up with an innovative and engaging Urban Room design. They were asked to carry out research, develop their ideas and architectural models. The project required students to think practically about community engagement and utilising an Urban Room as a vehicle to support this. The winning design, Open Frame, was piloted in Kingston town centre and was well received. Open Frame provided a good opportunity for residents who might not otherwise have been involved to engage with the Local Plan. A series of talks were hosted in the space – through these residents, Council Officers and guest speakers were able to examine some of the key challenges faced in Kingston. Over 200 people attended the talks in addition to the visitors to Open Frame.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The pilot project highlighted that new and innovative tools for engagement are needed and help to bring important planning matters to the heart of communities. Due to various logistical constraints, much of the planned engagement with some community groups could not take place and the audience could have better represented the diversity within the borough. This was a key lesson the team took on for future activity. Peter expressed that a lot of local government consultation exercises can go below the radar for most people and so initiatives like the Kingston Urban Room are necessary for people to have their say on important issues.

Insights for policymakers

Through this activity many residents were able to speak with officers who they may not have had contact with previously. The Urban Room provided the neutral space for residents and Officers to engage with one another which many appreciated. To strengthen these ties, Councils could consider how they can increase their visibility to residents more frequently and protect time to build deep partnerships with local groups.

3 Latin Elephant– engaging policy makers to develop a cultural centre in Southwark

Latin Elephant is a charity based in Elephant and Castle, which is home to some of the largest populations of Latin American people living in London. Whilst the area has experienced growing regeneration efforts, many residents expressed to Latin Elephant that they did not understand the regeneration process but felt the challenges it brought to their daily lives. This included the loss of culturally significant spaces. Latin Elephant sought to demystify the development regeneration process and promote a space where participation, engagement, and decision making by community members could be exercised. The organisation also seeks to support local independent business owners to retain, sustain and grow their businesses, and promote the Elephant and Castle area as the Latin Quarter. This, as well as community space provision, has been one of the organisation's biggest objectives since 2015.

Engagement Successes

In 2020 the Elephant and Castle shopping centre was demolished – this held cultural significance for many independent business owners and residents. Since then, Latin Elephant has been campaigning with other charities and community led initiatives for a cultural centre to fill that gap. Collectively they were able to incorporate the addition of a cultural centre into the local Labour manifesto which then successfully passed as a local policy demand. They achieved this in 2022 ahead of the local government elections. Latin Elephant campaigned with organisations in the Southwark Latin American Network (SLAN) and Race Ethnicity & Cultural Heritage Alliance (REACH); facilitation and support came from Community Southwark. This was achieved by consulting the local community and articulating their asks for a cultural centre to the council. Latin Elephant were part of a working group who acted as an intermediary between the community and the Local Authority. To effectively communicate with the community, the organisations used grassroots consultation approaches and provided opportunities for community members to express their own point of view. One of the engagement tactics used was to organise a community hustings. Hustings are panel discussions that are held in the run up to an election, in front of an audience that allow candidates to debate and answer community questions. The hustings were supported by the Community Southwark Ethnic Minority Community Groups project. Here, politicians were invited to attend meetings with community members to facilitate direct contact and in-person conversations. Collaborating with different organisations with shared concerns such as the SLAN and REACH to broaden outreach, they ensured greater opportunity for community voices to be heard. These organisations had a similar ethos to Latin Elephant as they are run by Global Majority people who seek to directly serve Global Majority populations.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Powerful instances of community engagement occur when politicians take the time to listen and see first-hand the livelihoods and the emotional, physical, and mental health impact of policy decisions on a group of people. While research is important to gather, sometimes that impact can get lost or not be felt once transcribed in text. Community hustings can provide community members the confidence and opportunity to feel the power in their own voice. Latin Elephant felt as though hustings function as a storytelling tool as they affirm the expertise with community members.

Insights for policymakers

In their opinion, Latin Elephant reflected that broadly improving accessibility needed to be at the forefront of council agendas as this in turn could improve community engagement efforts. For instance, removing language and digital barriers and bridging the digital divide can alleviate barriers to engagement for many communities. Councils should continue to prioritise consistent and proactive reach into communities.

4 Tonic Housing - affirmative retirement provision for older LGBT+ people in Lambeth

Tonic Housing is the UK's first LGBT+ affirmative retirement community which recognises the particular social and housing needs of older LGBT+ people. The organisation aims to connect LGBT+ people with better housing provision and support where they can be free from discrimination and celebrated in their communities. Tonic Housing embeds community engagement and co-design into its principal ways of working. Since its formation, Tonic Housing has created a community panel of older LGBT+ people, carefully selected to represent the diversity that exists within the LGBT+ community. TSIP spoke with Bob Green OBE, Head of Operations at Tonic Housing, to dive deeper into their long-term partnership with the GLA.

Engagement Successes

In the spring of 2021, Tonic Housing secured a loan of £5.7 million from the Mayor of London to purchase 19 apartments in Lambeth to offer to their service users. There has been considerable interest with around 400 people signed on their Register of Interest. This has shown Tonic Housing the strong demand and need for this service and they hope to expand their offerings in future. Upon formation, the community panel would meet to discuss what kind of housing they wanted, the gaps that existed, and what kind of care and support would be needed. This resulted in the "Community Panel Wishlist" where the goals and desires for the LGBT+ community in housing could be realised. Whilst some items on the "Wishlist" were not met, the discussions with the GLA created an avenue to voice desired housing requirements. The Community Panel continues to advise Tonic Housing on what other services they could develop and informs the message of their organisation. This is crucial as Tonic Housing sits on the London Housing panel, a network of community groups speaking directly to the GLA, and can share messages from the community panel members to policy makers.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

A frustration felt by Tonic Housing was the lengthy and uncertain process community groups would experience. At times, engagement with policymakers can reach a standstill with ongoing conversations prior to project delivery. The engagement process was made easier when there was a willingness to listen and try to understand the issues and lived experiences shared with policy makers. For instance, there is currently no substantial data on the amount of available housing for LGBT+ residents for councils to lean on. Whilst research in this area grows, it is supplemented by personal testimonies from the people within the LGBT+ community and housing strategies. Councils could play a crucial role in validating any gaps in data that may exist which can lead to future successful engagement.

Insights for policymakers

When asked about the current state of community engagement today, Green mentioned residents have limited capacity to engage with policymakers because daily struggles and barriers take priority. Within the current economic landscape and under the backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis, many community members feel the weight of daily life. This combined with resource constraints within community engagement teams in local authorities creates a challenging environment for engagement. Despite this, Green mentions that local authorities should seek to take a more relational based approach to engagement that centres community needs to mediate challenges. This should prioritise relationship building, trust and mutual respect when engaging with local communities.

5 CREW Energy– SWLEAP/The Energy Redress Scheme in South West London

CREW Energy is a Community Benefit Society and group of volunteers based in South West London who are committed to making their area an exemplar of a low-cost low-carbon energy future. They use an innovative community-led model to deliver energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to local councils and communities. Speaking to one of CREW's directors, Toby Costin, he talks about their engagement practices, and the successes and barriers they've faced collaborating with local councils in driving forward the net zero agenda. The South West London Energy Advice Partnership (SWLEAP) is a partnership between Habitats and Heritage and CREW Energy. They provide free energy advice across the London Boroughs of Richmond, Wandsworth and Merton and are funded by the Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme and the London Boroughs of Richmond and Wandsworth.

Engagement Successes

Through this project, the team was able to successfully roll out 1,500 interventions targeting fuel poverty. Toby highlighted Richmond and Wandsworth Council as areas of best practice. They were noted to be supportive, opened doors for CREW and understood the severity of the energy crisis. Both councils worked to connect the CREW energy team with relevant internal council teams. Importantly, these fruitful connections and collaborations between CREW energy and the different council teams resulted in new and innovative initiatives, including one highlighting the intersection of energy issues and young people – an area not typically approached by the community sector, which typically focuses on the older population.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Despite this, CREW struggled with a lack of consistency in process and structures across different councils. They also reflected that staff within councils did not always feel empowered and felt restricted in their actions which impacted on the support they were able to offer community organisations. They felt as though some teams worked in silos and lacked communication between departments.

Insights for policymakers

At times both councils and community organisations can face frustrations during the engagement process which can lead to delays in decision making processes. It is important that all parties feel supported to make decisions, resourced and empowered if true change is going to be made.

6 SAAFI- capacity building support for local organisations in Brent

The Somali Advice and Forum for Information (SAAFI) is a Somali founded and led community organisation. They aim to help local people with English as a second language through advice and training. SAAFI is located in Church Road, Brent - North West London. In 2021, SAAFI in partnership with other based community organisations were awarded funding through the GLA High Streets for All Challenge Fund to support local groups through distributing funds aimed to build their internal capacity. Speaking with Rhoda Ibrahim, CEO, she provides a deep dive into this activity.

Engagement Successes

SAAFI operated as the primary lead and distributed funds to local organisations helping to build their internal capacity which is often over-stretched. This fund supports resident-focused organisations that do not have the necessary internal resources and structure to ensure that they are stable and sustainable. The project successfully put together a comprehensive community programme and funds have directly helped to transform local organisations. This has been the first time that organisations on Church Road have been engaged in this way to receive funds to support capacity building, and there is an appetite for additional work. This means that all organisations had to learn how to work with one another and be patient during the ideation phase.

“We distributed funds to organisations to help with capacity building. Some used this to hire bid writers and fundraisers to support their ability to apply for even more funding.”

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

SAAFI struggled with personnel changes within the local authority team which meant that there wasn't a clear person aligned to the project in the very initial stages. This presented challenges during project initiation where roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders weren't aligned. To directly combat this, the teams developed an agreement document that listed roles, responsibilities, and a working code of conduct that all organisations had a role in developing.

Insights for policymakers

Community engagement in Church Road faces significant challenges that have been exacerbated by the current cost of living crisis which heavily impacts residents. To enhance community engagement, it is imperative for local authorities to adopt a culturally sensitive and inclusive approach that recognises the community's unique characteristics and historical context. Collaboration should be based on mutual respect and active involvement of community members in decision-making processes.

7 Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum– engaging residents to develop a Neighbourhood plan in Brent

Harlesden is a vibrant ward in the borough of Brent in North West London. In 2014, residents, the Harlesden Town Team and community members created a local Neighbourhood Forum. The Neighbourhood Forum was able to establish a Neighbourhood Plan for Harlesden. This plan serves as a document that clearly states what residents want to see happen in terms of planning and development. Once adopted by the local planning authority, Neighbourhood Plans acquire legal status as part of local planning policy. Speaking to Ilaria Esposito – Coordinator at the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum, we learnt more about their process of community engagement.

Engagement Successes

The Localism Act of 2011 facilitated the devolution of decision making from local and central government to communities and residents. The now defunct Harlesden Town Team was created by local people and faith groups coming together to discuss and prioritise a future vision for Harlesden. This included affordable housing options, businesses on high street and green spaces being protected from development. The Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum went on to develop the plan. This was achieved through regular Forum meetings with various stakeholders over a five-year period. This included High Street businesses, community groups, local councillors, and local authority planning experts. When the plan was finally presented to the council in summer 2019, it was met with support, ratified by a referendum, and subsequently adopted by Brent Council, The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The consultations that took place to develop the Neighbourhood Plan engaged a wide and diverse group of people living in Harlesden. Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum would use accessible spots such as community halls, schools, faith-based venues, and local pubs to include residents. Doing so provided more opportunity for collaboration and connection between community members and the local authority. Engaging with people in their local areas helped build trust between residents and the council. Furthermore, through the process of engagement, many residents developed a deeper understanding on how to lobby councillors to get from idea to action around local policies as quickly as possible. Ilaria emphasises that to make the engagement truly successful, continuity and consistency are needed. People need to feel as though their voices have been heard through action and subsequent outcomes.

“You need to demonstrate your existence and the effectiveness of your existence...that you are there to make sure the plan is implemented.”

Insights for policymakers

Development of cost-effective community spaces where local people can engage and organise is necessary for successful community-led engagement. Currently, the Neighbourhood Forum is seeking to expand its boundaries to include residents outside the Forum's area but are considering that a lack of accessible meeting space might influence their long-term impact. Whilst community spaces exist, cost and scheduling concerns can act as a deterrent for community organisations to use these spaces. A key factor that led to the Forum's long-standing impact was a powerful sense of unity amongst community members. However, a lack of designated community spaces makes engagement more challenging and unity harder to foster. Furthermore, the lack of funding for community engagement activity can further hamper the ability of small organisations, such as the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum to involve the wider community in all parts of their work.

8 Newham Co-create - using a digital platform to engage residents in local policy

Newham Co-Create is an online participatory budgeting platform utilised by Newham Council for consultation and participatory processes. It complements face-to-face interactions with digital resident engagement. Various services within the Council utilise the platform for activities. The platform allows residents to set priorities, generate ideas, vote, and participate in project delivery through distinct phases, promoting transparency and engagement continuity over the platform's two-year cycle. Initially, the Mayor of Newham allocated £250,000 to each local area, with subsequent increases in the budget allocation per neighbourhood per year. Speaking with Amelie Pollet and Kris Krishnarajah, from the Co-Create team, we took a deep dive into the platform and its uses.

Engagement Successes

The user-friendly nature of the Newham Co-Create interface has played a pivotal role in encouraging active involvement. Residents found the platform easy to navigate, and its digestible information enhanced transparency and understanding of the participatory processes. The team embraced this positive response as a confirmation of their efforts to create a platform that resonated with the local population, fostering a sense of ownership and active citizenship. The initial offline deliberation stage proved to be crucial, allowing residents to express their priorities and concerns in-depth. Through this phase, the team gained valuable insights into the specific needs and aspirations of the community, providing a solid foundation for subsequent online interactions. The platform has achieved increased engagement, particularly in voting activities, resulting in over 50,000 new unique visitors since its inception. Those who register to vote can receive valuable information from other services, further enhancing community involvement. Moving forward, the platform seeks to attract new individuals and groups in Newham to participate actively.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

As residents engaged with the platform, they shared a diverse array of priority ideas that were both specific and varied. However, due to the significant amount of funding distributed, the team faced challenges when categorising and effectively addressing the many ideas. This led to a reflection on the importance of robust and streamlined processes to manage information. They re-evaluated their approach to idea categorisation and funding allocation, striving to strike a balance between embracing diversity and ensuring impactful outcomes. One of the primary challenges lies in digital literacy and poverty, which hinder some residents' ability to engage effectively. To address this, the platform offers in-person events where residents can sign up using iPads. They utilise paper votes at libraries for offline engagement and deliver beginner computer classes to improve digital literacy. However, residents with learning disabilities find it difficult to navigate the platform due to information overload, prompting the organisation of codesign sessions to enhance accessibility.

Insights for policymakers

Community engagement in Newham faces several challenges that can impact upon its effectiveness. These include digital exclusion, poverty, and a cost-of-living crisis, which collectively impact residents' capacity to engage in civic life. Despite these obstacles, Newham has a considerable number of participation and co-production initiatives, actively involving its residents in various processes. However, not all services prioritise meaningful engagement and participation, necessitating a heightened awareness of the importance of inclusivity in community involvement. There is a recurrent pattern of certain groups being underrepresented in these processes, indicating a need for targeted outreach strategies to address this disparity. Enhancing community engagement requires a multifaceted approach that addresses these challenges and ensures that meaningful participation is fostered for all residents.

9 Poetic Unity - using poetry to engaging young Black people in climate justice activity in Brixton

Poetic Unity is a charity committed to empowering young Black people in their most authentic expression of self, giving them a voice, and ensuring their perspectives are valued. Through safe spaces, spoken word events, and workshops, they foster personal growth, mental health awareness, and educational development. We spoke with Ryan Matthew-Robinson, Founder, to take a deep dive into their experiences engaging young Black people to think about air pollution in their local environment. Poetic Unity was funded by Impact on Urban Health and the Purpose Foundation to develop a unique approach to engaging young Black people. The collaboration took the form of a pilot model, allowing participants to express their perspectives and share their concerns and ideas for a future with cleaner air.

Engagement Successes

Young people used poetry as a medium to facilitate a knowledge exchange. They developed workshops facilitated by a diverse team of movement and art creatives. Here, discussions centred around how air pollution often excludes Black voices, particularly those from poorer communities in Lambeth. By creating a dedicated space to learn about air pollution and prioritise its importance, the project successfully encouraged participants to engage with the issue. A key aspect of Poetic Unity's success stems from its foundation rooted in lived experiences. The team is intentionally composed of Black and mixed-race individuals from working-class backgrounds and this supports their strong connection to the community. During the project, young people recognised the gravity of air pollution, climate justice and the significance of raising awareness about "invisible illnesses." Ryan noted that air pollution and climate change can often feel like such large complex issues which young Black people may not perceive to have an actual effect on their immediate lives. This can be due to the immediate harm caused by living through racism and poverty.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

As this was a pilot project there was some nervousness about a potential extension. Ryan noted that funding long standing engagement activities were key to ensuring young people remained engaged and that there was a foundation to ensure payment for young people's participation and the opportunity for full time work. However, despite initial apprehensions about the project's longevity, there are currently ongoing discussions between Purpose and Impact on Urban Health regarding an expansion to the project. This creates a promise for sustained impact and future success between partners. This was a key lesson in building trust for Poetic Unity as the funding team managed expectations of future delivery and only committed to projects that they were able to deliver and remained open and transparent throughout the process.

Insights for policymakers

Poetic Unity has experienced challenges when securing on-going funding for projects. Ryan highlighted the necessity for continuous communication, a clear contact person within the funding organisation and dedicated dialogue between both parties. He stressed that funders should gain a better understanding of community organisations and their tangible impact on the ground. Effective community engagement is characterised by understanding the communities they serve and collaborating with grassroots organisations. Additionally, longer-term funding could provide young people with greater stability, particularly given the impact the cost-of-living crisis on a young person's ability to connect with others.

10 Climate Action Lewisham - exploring community connections on car-free streets

Climate Action Lewisham (CAL) is a resident-led action group who seek to generate new initiatives that reduce the carbon footprint and promote healthy living practices. Lewisham was selected as the London Borough of Culture in 2022. As part of this, CAL was funded to deliver a community streets project called 'Social Fabric' that sought to create new community connections once busy streets were made traffic free for 3-4 hours. We spoke with Titania Krimpas, a volunteer at Climate Action Lewisham to deep dive into this engagement activity.

Engagement Successes

The CAL team understood the need to imbue artistic and cultural nuance into the project and partnered with a local community artist, Salina Gani, to facilitate the development of a community mural. The mural was set up along the streets where residents could express themselves artistically. Residents were asked to imagine what their streets would look and feel like if it were traffic free. Following these events, the artwork residents created was made available in local libraries and residents have been having conversations with one another that centre connection on traffic-free streets. One of the successes of this project was the use of a community focused local artist, Salina, who was able to navigate difficult conversations on the day and ensure residents were engaged in the activity at hand. Furthermore, over the course of the project over 450 residents engaged with the community street. Many noted that opportunities to interact with art in a community focused lens were not always accessible as they had to pay to access similar events.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Often most residents feel as though they do not have the time or energy to engage with climate activism, but most can feel the difference cleaner air brought to their daily lives. Creativity, connection, and the physical experience of traffic free streets can serve as a springboard for future discussions about climate action and car reduction. Policymaker engagement was key to ensuring the project's success. The CAL team mentioned policy makers were excited to engage, especially with initiatives that centred on new ways of working. Therefore, closing the feedback loop with policy makers following verbal conversations was a key lesson learnt through this project.

Insights for policymakers

Engaging residents in climate change activity is particularly difficult during economic instability as many residents may not feel as motivated to consider their environmental impact. To mitigate this, policy makers should seek to trust the experience of community organisations that are currently engaging with communities and actively seek out their voices in policy development. Creative engagement methods should be considered when engaging with residents, particularly when facilitating conversations around topic areas that could be met with resistance. By using an art-led approach facilitated through a trusted community organisation, policymakers could potentially have a more human-centred nuanced approach to engagement around a somewhat difficult topic. The CAL team mentioned that good community engagement work is born out of humility, taking a back seat in conversations, and being reachable to community members.