

Social infrastructure and social integration

About the research

Social Life and Hawkins Brown have recently been commissioned by the GLA to carry out research into the **role of social infrastructure in enabling social integration, while supporting inclusive growth**. This is part of the Mayor's Good Growth by Design programme and will feed into planning and policy guidelines. A GLA Good Growth publication will be made available to the wider public bringing together our findings.

Definitions

Social infrastructure covers a range of services and facilities that meet local and strategic needs and contribute towards a good quality of life and to social connections. This includes both formal social infrastructure including health and education provision, community, faith, play, youth, recreation and sports facilities; and informal spaces and services, such as barbershops, pubs, shops and cafés which can be key to the social networks that also support community life.

The GLA's definition of **social integration** has three key dimensions: relationships, participation, and equality. Our work will explore how social infrastructure contributes to these.

Our questions

The research will focus on three key questions:

Q1 How does social infrastructure contribute to social integration?

Q2 What are the new innovative models of social infrastructure in London, nationally and internationally, and how can these contribute to social integration?

Q3 What methods are local authorities and other planning bodies using to understand the contribution of social infrastructure to social integration?

Approach

The research fall into six stages:

1 Scoping: a small number of interviews with key stakeholders plus a focused literature review and exploration of relevant London data.

2 Workshop: a roundtable workshop bringing together London-wide stakeholders

3 In-depth portraits of three areas: three local areas have been chosen for in-depth research: Catford as an example of a town centre; the Gascoyne Estate in Homerton as an example of a social housing estate that has been through regeneration; and Surbiton as an outer-London centre.

4 Primary research: will include an initial workshop, stakeholder interviews, interviews with residents and people using social infrastructure plus observation of how social infrastructure three workshops in local areas to understand how social infrastructure is being used and the relationship between formal provision and less form provision, supports and networks.

5 Case studies: four in-depth case studies and eight to ten brief case studies will look at different models of formalised social infrastructure. This will draw on examples from London and beyond.

6 Survey of London boroughs and planning authorities: this will investigate how social infrastructure is being considered from within planning processes, and as part of wider approaches to area regeneration and new housing development.