Big Meet 3 'The Place Alliance in 2015'

SUMMARY RECORD

The third 'big meet' of the Place Alliance was held on the 24th of Feb 2015, at UCL. The event was a chance for Place Alliance supporters from across the country to get together for networking and exchange and for the first time to publicly state their support for the alliance. First results of the mapping exercise were reported, as well as the progress of their work towards the common goal of improving place quality and the Farrell Review. The whole group discussed the national survey or 'mapping exercise', put forward future trajectories for Place Alliance work, and participated in the first of the nationwide TalkPlace exercises.
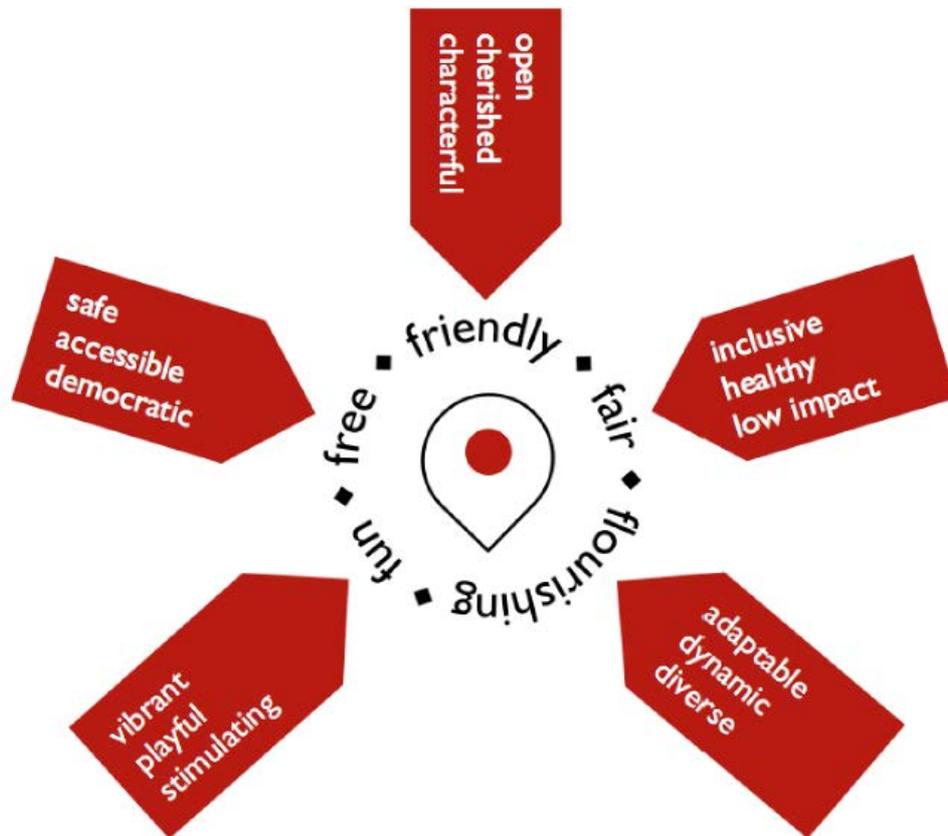

The Big Meet 3 was very well attended with 104 people coming from as far as Scotland and Cornwall. These people are listed by name in appendix A. They represented 81 different organisations, and several independent individuals. The minister of state for DCMS, Ed Vaizey MP was present at the opening of the event to address the audience and take questions, and many other place alliance supporters had wanted to attend but for various reasons were not able and requested to be kept informed.

The event began with an update on the progress of the Place Alliance and an address from the minister of state.

Matthew Carmona welcomed the delegates and introduced the minister, who gave an address praising the Farrell Review, the Place Alliance and encouraging people, organisations and institutions to support the Place Alliance. His key points were that 1) a strong united Place Alliance 'voice' was the most effective way forward, and 2) it should engage central government, local government and developers. He then answered a series of questions, and all of this is being fed into the Core Steering Groups' reflections. The address is summarized in appendix B

Matthew Carmona then gave a presentation to update on the work of the Place Alliance since the Big Meet 2 in October 2014. He began by explaining how they had been connecting across the sector and collaborating to provide leadership, as set out

in the Place Alliance 'Purpose Document'. Through this work the Place Alliance had produced a vision on the value of place quality across economic social and cultural spheres, which is recognized by all, contributes to the quality of life of everyday citizens and to sustainability of communities and development. He emphasized the need to move beyond policies and that action is needed urgently, and explained the 5 'f's that underpin the Place Alliance vision. The full purpose and vision documents online (as well as all presentations from the day) at https://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/placealliance/ .

Next, Lucy Natarajan presented the first results of the mapping exercise that presentation and the draft report are also online. Feedback from the delegates covered a range of points (Appendix C) for the final report.

After the plenary session, there was a networking lunch for delegates, kindly sponsored by the IHBC (the Institute for Historic Building Conservation).

After the networking lunch Max Farrell gave an update on the Farrell Review He recapped the five themes and the progress that had been made, praising the networks and initiative that others had taken. He showed a selection of the individual work listed below and the ways that government was picking up on it. The full progress report is available at http://www.farrellreview.co.uk/

- Heritage & Future Cities
- Improving the Quality of Local Decision-Making & Design Literacy
- International Forum of Architecture
- PLACE Review
- Proactive Planning and Public Service
- School Education & Teacher Training
- The Place Alliance
- The Role of Artists and the Arts
- Urban Rooms & Virtual Urban Rooms
- Civic Champions

Sophia de Sousa of the Glass-House Community Led Design and Esther Kurland of Urban Design London introduced the TalkPlace initiative. Delegates participated in the first exercise and gave feedback on the experience and conversations. There was a wide-ranging discussion and general enthusiasm for the initiative and these conversations will be taken forward with further TalkPlace events for a picture of the national conversation.

In closing the event Matthew Carmona asked those who wished to express their support for the Place Alliance to complete the supporters form. This contained a variety of different ways to support the alliance. Many supporters completed these and several emailed a copy back after consulting with their colleagues. Those who requested for their support to be made public are listed on the Place Alliance webpage https://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/placealliance/ .

Appendix A

Name	Organisation
Adrian Gale	Design Action Devon & Cornwall
Alan Thompson	ATP Architects
Alastair Upton	Creative Foundation
Ali Alsaraf	Commonplace
Andrew Hugill	Chartered Institute of Highways and Transport (CIHT)
Angela Godrich	Notting Hill Housing
Anna Harper	Urban Design London
Anna Scott-Marshall	RIBA
Ben Van Bruggen	vb Urban Design
Biljana Savic	The Prince's Regeneration Trust
Bob Erens	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)
Charles Wagner	English Heritage (EH)
Charlie Peel	Individual
Charlotte Myhrum	Places Matter (Design Network in North West)
Clementine Traynard	HACT (The Housing Associations Charitable Trust)
Colin Haylock	Colin Haylock
David Kincaid	Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)
David McDonald	Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)
Deb Upadhyaya	Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Deborah Nagan	(uncommon) Landscape Consultants
Diane Dever	Folkestone Fringe
Ela Palmer	Iceni
Elanor Warwick	Affinity Sutton
Elisabeta Ilie	UCL
Esther Kurland	Transport for London (TfL)/Urban Design London (UDL Design Network in London)
Fee Schmidt-Soltau	Commonplace
Finn Williams	Common Office
Freddie Gick	Civic Voice
Georgia Wrighton	CPRE London
Harry Birchill	RTPI
Helen Pineo	Building Research Establishment Ltd
Helen Walker	Brighton University
Henrietta Nowne	Cathedral Group (Holdings) Ltd
Ian Poole	West Suffolk
James White	University of Glasgow
Jane Conway	Luton BC
Janet Morris	STAMP (Shad Thames Area Management Partnership)
Jim MacDonald	Architecture and Design Scotland
John Pulford	London Borough of Tower Hamlets Conservation and Design Advisory Panel

John Worthington	Academy of Urbanism
Jonathan Schifferes	RSA
Joris Van der Starre	HCA
Justin Webber	Watford BC
Kate Jones	Cabe at the Design Council
Kate Kendall	IHBC
Katherine Donaghy	Urban Design London (UDL Design Network in London)
Kay Pallaris	Mapping futures
Laura Caton	Local Government Association
Lewis Biggs	Institute for Public Art
Louise Dredge	The Glass-House Community Led Design
Louise Goodison	CazeNove Architects
Lucy Natarajan	UCL (Bartlett School of Planning)
Lyndsey Drea	Farrells
Marie Burns	Burns+ Nice
Mark Ellison	Eastleigh Borough Council
Mark Pearson	ABEC Network/Design Action Devon & Cornwall
Matthias Wunderlich	Urban Initiatives
Matthew Carmona	UCL (Bartlett School of Planning)
Matthew Rabagliati	The Heritage Alliance
Max Farrell	Farrells
Mhora Samuel	Theatres Trust
Nicholas Bennett	London Borough of Bromley
Nick Jones	Totality
Nigel Longstaff	Barratt Homes
Peter Dickinson	Chartered Institute of Highways and Transport (CIHT)
Peter Jones	CIHT/UCL
Peter Karpinsky	Individual
Peter Studdert	LLDC Quality Review Panel
Rachel Jones	London Borough of Lewisham
Richard Muncaster	Living Streets
Richard Simmons	University of Greenwich
Richard Timmerman	UCL
Richard Tracey	Atlantic Gateway Parklands
Rob Cowan	Urban Design London (UDL Design Network in London)
Robert Huxford	Urban Design Group (UDG)
Robin Nicholson	Cambridgeshire Quality Panel
Sabine Coady Schäbit	Collaborative Centre for the Built Environment (CCBE)
Samantha Malitskie	David Miller Architects
Samer Bagaeen	University of Brighton
Sandy Taylor	Independent
Sarah Crofts	The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
Simon Carne	Individual
Simon Collyns	Central
Simon Foxell	the Edge

Sophia de Sousa	The Glass-House Community Led Design
Stephania Fiorentino	UCL
Stephen Gallagher	Academy of Urbanism
Stephen Russell	Landscape Institute
Steve Bee	Academy of Urbanism
Steve Cole	National Housing Federation
Steve McKenna	Individual
Stuart Croucher	Crossrail Ltd
Sue Vincent	London Borough of Camden
Susan May	Affinity Sutton
Tim Naylor	Planning Officers Society
Tobias Davidson	Tobias Davidson Architects
Tom Bolton	Centre for Cities
Tony Burton	Big Lottery Fund
Tony Mulhall	RICS
Vincent Goodstadt	Individual
Wendy Clarke	UCL (Bartlett School of Planning)
Zoe Spiliopoulou	Sustrans

Appendix B: Opening Address from the Minister

The minister began by warmly endorsing the Big Meet and the Place Alliance. He paid tribute to the work of Terry Farrell and the recent a review, which he had commissioned and had coined the acronym of PLACE. He expounded how he personally believed that the work of good design must be routine rather than exceptional. He also acknowledge the recent research of the team at the Bartlett School of Planning's on the former publically funded Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.

He said, "I hope that all the people in this room will get behind the Place Alliance. It's very good to see so many people here, and I think the Place Alliance represents a huge opportunity for all the wide range of voices in this debate to speak as one. It's a lot easier to lobby government as one voice albeit incorporating many different voices individuals and organisations. I hope that this is not taken the wrong way. I don't see the Place Alliance as being a threat to any other organization." He gave a couple of parallels, including the recently create the Creative Industries Federation, saying "within that Federation exist many powerful trade bodies that have a very powerful voice with government, but as the creative industries Federation they provide a unique voice, a powerful platform for all those disparate voices to come together and focus on a range of issues." And similarly cited the Heritage Alliance as a very good example of the organisations of all sizes coming together to have one voice and how their work was very well recognised.

He went on to highlight the benefits of the Alliance, "what you see around you today – the opportunity to network, smaller and larger sharing ideas. Being a strong advocate for this incredibly important agenda. I really hope that you will get behind the Place Alliance and I know that the Place Alliance wants to make it as easy as possible for you to enjoy your membership. There aren't exorbitant membership fees, I know you can be a de facto member simply by tweeting, using the logo and filling in the form on the table in front of you to show you want to participate."

He then praised the Place Alliance and the Farrell Review one year on. "First of all from my point of view the Farrell Review has been an outstanding success. Max Farrell and other members of the team here today. I said to Terry at the start if you produce a report that is simply binary, you spend a few months and make a few recommendations and as government to do them all you won't get anywhere. From my experience, it is much better to have a movement to have an organization that is flexible, that adapts to the environment, and that is not simply a paper report that sits on the shelf, but is a moving body that continues to meet and to campaign." He gave the example of Ian Livingstone's work on digital skills and the NextGen movement that emanated from that, which continues to campaign and be an effective voice for people interested in digital skills.

He said that the Farrell review has been exceptional example of engaging with the wider community and keeping this movement going. He also praised the Place Alliance for its lack of ego, and willingness to see what the goal is rather than being

too hung up on the structures. He described the goal in this way. "There are three key stakeholders in this debate. One of them is the government and in particular the Department for Communities and Local Government which has already set up a Design Review panel. That is about trying to embed in government's mind the need for good design and planning. Secondly we need the developers on board, we need far-sighted developers and good practice examples that an encourage others. And thirdly we need local councils on board, and we ned to find champions within local authorities to lead by examples." He clearly stated that this didn't rule out central government action in addition, and said that if the government was presented with clear asks, they would listen and potentially full them. He said the engaging with government, developers and local authorities were the top priorities.

During the Q&A session, the minister discussed the cross-party nature of the issue and encouraged cross-party networking to continue, recognizing the work and support of Roberta Blackman-Woods. The delegates raise the issues of different challenges and experiences across the country, including at the strategic level and cuts in resources to local authorities. The minister noted the need for leadership at the local level and new positive partnership working experiences of authorities, as well as reiterating the need to focus on the goals ahead and getting behind the Place Alliance.

Appendix C: Points on the Mapping Report

Gaps

- There is a range of work much of this is local and of high value but it is uncoordinated. In the absence of publicly funded CABE there isn't anything bringing it together. The responses to the mapping exercise substantiated this point.
- There is a possibility to collaborate for housing research about Social Value, e.g. connect social housing providers to contribute to social value research [Affinity Sutton, HACT, LGA]
- Gaps on rural areas and Green Infrastructure – we might have a meeting about this with CPRE, RSPB, RTPI, TCPA etc.. We could find out how communities feel about spaces as we do for housing.
- There is a large gap around the Big Picture and the future. The activities are reactive to things that are ongoing but how can we strategize? The collective impact of multiple smaller efforts is not discussed. We need to think big and think to the future, especially on houses and where we'll find the amenities they need. How can we make that work 30 rather than 5 years ahead.
- The economics are missing from the debate, e.g. in North Nottingham the unemployment is extreme, this overrides other concerns. The Big Picture is critical to addressing the issues. What do people really want? A job, decent schooling etc.
- There are case studies, but there's a gap in disseminating good practice to/from authorities and few opportunities for local authorities to share e.g. Harringay Council draft local plan includes a quality charter.

How to reach wider Audience

- Community groups are proactively trying to engage, and we need to stop talking about empowering/influencing them – welcome them to the table! Language is critical, they don't have the expertise but would welcome it. But they are experts in the local areas.
- Linking up with the audience of community groups who are passionate Prince's Foundation offers to link in on this.
- CABE wanted to bring communities onto DR panels, this is intellectually challenging but ultimately very useful due to inclusion on local knowledge. Who is doing this now?
- We need to bridge the gap between the quality of what we produce and the ways that it's experienced.
- Keep in mind the private public spaces, they have more quality sometimes. Remember the 5 Fs.
- Remember who is building the place, and engage more developers. Also need to get the media more involved.
- Lobby government to get place into schools' curricula – as advocated by Farrrells.

Where we can have more impact

- Local Authorities are obliged to have ecologists and access to their expertise but there is nowhere in legislation that requires this for place. No statutory basis to have people who know what they're talking about advising planners. Also Planners have little time to take on the place-making agenda and have to weigh it against e.g. safety.
- We should look to projects/initiatives that we can support.
- There is a large skills gap in local authorities. Public Service (Fynn William's initiative) is trying to attract young people in to public service. Not to prevent them re-building their own resources.
- In Croydon the Place Making team is retained and had enlightened leadership, need to make sure the confidence is built around policy and skills.
- Place Alliance can help us identify these things, and individual orgs will take this forwards. Need to be much better at defining our terms, to then persuade the wider community that we are speaking clearly, and what makes better places.
- Who are 'we' – the success as a movement needs to look at how to build this – passion not professions. Break down where the passions for this can be found, and look at sociology and political dynamics. Operate differently for this.