GLAINTELLIGENCE

Understanding the social impacts of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme:

a qualitative retrospective on rounds 1 and 2

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MAYOR OF LONDON

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Executive Summary

Since 2014, following a recommendation from a GLA commissioned report on an Open Ideas Platform by Future Cities Catapult, the GLA's Regeneration Unit have been developing and delivering an innovative and pioneering new tool to support local investment in London's communities: The Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme. The initiative explores the potential for the GLA to pledge to civic crowdfunding projects as 'one of the crowd', enabling London's citizens to deliver and manage spaces and places that suit local needs and identities. This represents the first time a Mayor of a major European city has funded local civic improvement projects in this way, and is hoped to signal a changing tide for regeneration and planning engagement.

This study, commissioned by the Regeneration Unit and undertaken by the GLA's Opinion Research team, attends to the 'softer' social impacts of regeneration interventions that can be easily overlooked in traditional evaluative research for policy. Significantly, the report deals only and entirely with non-financial benefits of civic crowdfunding, attending to a gap in research previously identified by Nesta (2015). Through a period of qualitative research, specifically semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, with a sample of 7 project groups, insight and understanding has been gathered on the experiences of those who embark on delivering a project as part of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme.

Following thematic analysis, discussion has focused on the impacts that being part of a project in the programme has had on community cohesion and civic pride; the role and development of skills and knowledge throughout the process; and health and well-being effects. Through doing this, the potential for a changing role for local authorities in an era of alternative finance is highlighted. As such, the following key points fall out of the research:

- Projects funded through the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme generally have a positive impact on the communities within which they are situated. Projects appear to bring a number of community members and organisations with shared local interests together, often initiating integration between groups who would not otherwise come together. The level of participation within these groups spans from pledging to direct involvement in projects, and as a result, is indicative of a new, more accessible and inclusive method of community engagement.

- Being part of a Crowdfunding Programme project group has significant positive impacts for growing skills and knowledge. The programme catalyses a learning-by-doing process, drawing on the capacity of other members of their group or wider community, leading to personal and, in some cases, professional development. However, an initial standard of skills is required for the successful delivery of a project. Without some pre-existing capacity, the process can be arduous and time-consuming. Since individuals without pre-existing skills are also more likely to be in lower social-grades, additional support should be made available to avoid inequalities in the socio-economic status of applicants.

- Bias inevitably exists within project groups, whose members tend to be better educated, more technologically competent and already practice some degree of political or civic participation. This was, to some extent, expected since communications were not universal. Nonetheless, this should be addressed through the selection and post-selection process moving forwards, as well as through a more concerted effort to encourage applications from individuals and groups in more deprived areas in the weeks and months leading to the application deadline.

- The project delivery process has a plethora of positive impacts on participants' mental health, building confidence, self-worth and providing groups with a sense of accomplishment. However, stress, anxiety and fatigue emerge as potential negative impacts of the crowdfunding delivery process. These issues may be easily alleviated through the provision of additional project support and expertise from GLA officers, and thus far do not appear to have been detrimental to overall project delivery.

Based on this period of primary research, a series of recommendations for policy and programme development have been made. These recommendations encompass process and delivery, marketing and communications, and research and analysis, highlighting potential developments for the Programme which harness existing strengths and help to alleviate potential problems, particularly with regard to social equity. Moreover, the report re-conceptualises and clarifies the role of local government in the process of crowdfunding revealing not a reduced role, but a new role of support and guidance, rather than merely facilitation.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background and context

Crowdfunding refers to the practice of funding a project by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people, usually via the internet. Early instances of using the internet to fund projects date to 1997, with the method gaining more traction with the emergence of *ArtistShare* in 2003, though the term did not emerge in popular discourse until 2006. The model typically involves three types of actors: the initiator, the backers (or the crowd), and the platform. Traditionally, crowdfunding has been reserved to the realms of arts and music, though more recently it has been used as a tool to fundraise a plethora of projects from post-graduate study to game development. Recent Nesta research has estimated that crowdfunding facilitated £3.2 billion worth of loans, investments and donations in the UK in 2015 (Zhang et al. 2016). Civic crowdfunding represents a further development of the tool, as individuals and organisations begin to raise funds through online platforms for local urban development projects, as opposed to applying for traditional governmental or charity grant funding, or leaving urban development to local governments or developers.

The Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme represents a shift in the local governance and financial regime. Alongside large investments , often millions of pounds, into local areas for large state-led regeneration schemes, in this pilot programme, the Mayor, through the Regeneration Unit, trails acting as one of the crowd, pledging up to £20,000 to projects designed and uploaded onto *Spacehive* (the platform) by local community groups (the initiator). Round 1 of the pilot saw the GLA as the sole funder of the majority of projects, whilst in Round 2 a requirement of at least 25% of the financial target derived through crowdfunding in the community was implemented, transforming the Programme into a 'matched crowdfunding' scheme. At time of writing, the Regeneration Unit had run two rounds of the pilot programme, funding 37 projects from a budget of £600,000 ring-fenced from the High Street Fund. In early 2016, a further £700,000 was committed to the Programme from the London Regeneration Fund and £30,000 from the Food Team, totalling £1.33m committed to the fund.

Previous research by GLA Intelligence revealed some interesting insight on perceptions of London's built environment. With data from participants weighted to match the demographic make-up of London, only 23% of people were satisfied that developments meet the needs of the local population, and only 21% were satisfied with the opportunity they have to participate in planning and regeneration[1]. Perhaps more pertinent, regression analysis revealed that of 10 statements surrounding the built environment, the opportunity to have a say in what is built and where was a key driver of overall satisfaction with the city's

built environment. Moreover, in a small survey conducted via Talk London, City Hall's online research community, 80% of respondents felt engagement with development should involve more than consultation, whilst in an analysis of planning consultation comments, it was noted that NIMBYism is currently responsible for much of the participation in planning, which tends to show an 'us vs. them' dialectic. The Crowdfunding Programme attempts to address these issues in three ways: increasing feelings of ownership in localities; overcoming problems in traditional or top-down design solutions; and minimising the reactive element of participation that has come to be associated with built environment participation. Moreover, the opportunity to crowdsource solutions was hoped to facilitate creativity and innovation, unlocking new ideas for London, based on a unique understanding of local conditions.

The Regeneration Unit wished to understand whether and what social impacts surfaced as a result of participating in the Programme. As such, in January 2016, they commissioned the Opinion Research and Statistics team within GLA Intelligence to undertake a retrospective on the possible added value of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme beyond typical growth measures, including its potential clout as a tool for participation. mySociety (2015) and Nesta (2016) note a dearth of research on civic technology and the non-financial benefits of matched crowdfunding respectively, thus the detailed study of social impacts of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme herein addresses this identified paucity.

Regeneration research and evaluation has typically sought to quantify and monetise outputs of programmes and projects, partly a result of pre-existing evaluation frameworks (including those undertaken by delivery partners) attached to large projects. The following piece of research represents the first time the GLA's Regeneration Unit have attempted to measure and reflect on impacts of their work that cannot be easily quantified. This is partly a result of the nature of the Crowdfunding Programme which requires a different, more dynamic relationship with delivery partners whom, in normal proceedings, would undertake self-evaluation for the Unit. Since these studies would not be undertaken, it was deemed paramount that a retrospective study be commissioned to holistically understand the programme.

Since methodological choices herein differ from traditional evaluation methods undertaken by delivery partners or by externally procured bodies for the Regeneration Unit, it is hoped that this research will serve a dual purpose in revealing the importance of monitoring and reflecting on softer impacts that result from regeneration, and provide the Unit with a model from which to continue to reflect on and develop the social impacts of their interventions.

1.2 Research objective

Research design and delivery was undertaken to provide intelligence to the Regeneration Unit, informing and supporting their appraisal and evaluation of the recently implemented and on-going pilot of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme, facilitated through Spacehive. This was to be achieved by meeting the following objectives:

- To assess, through primary data collection, the longevity of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme, based on the social impacts felt in localities where projects are delivered.

- To draw out where difficulties emerged in the process of project delivery, focusing through methodological choices, on the intangible benefits of such a programme, including impacts and outcomes of projects, considering the impact of the programme on participation and engagement.

- To ascertain the problems that emerge with the delivery of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme both internal to the GLA, and externally with project groups.

- To identify appropriate measurements and methodological options to enable on-going social impact monitoring of the Crowdfunding Programme.

Meeting these objectives will assist the Regeneration Unit in the development of a new social Key Performance Indicator for their Unit deliverables more broadly. It will also contribute to a wider piece of externally procured research on the four pilot rounds of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme examining qualitative and quantitative data to enable a holistic understanding of the impacts of the programme on project groups. Additionally it will enable the Regeneration Unit to make ongoing iterations to improve the day-to-day delivery of the programme and how their support function operates in relationship with delivery partners, exploring organisational change.

To enable these objectives to be met through primary retrospective research, the following research questions were considered throughout data collection and analysis:

- **To what extent does involvement with a project funded through the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme catalyse social benefits for participants and their wider communities?**

- **What barriers have emerged in the delivery of projects, and where applicable, how were these barriers overcome?**

- **What internal process alterations and developments can be implemented to increase the success of the Programme and its projects?**

- **What is the role of City Hall in the emerging sector of alternative finance?**

It was anticipated by Regeneration Officers as well as the ORS team that the Mayor's Crowdfunding Pilot Programme would have a plethora of social benefits for those involved in projects, and that these would include community cohesion, capacity building and civic pride. It was thought these benefits would emerge from the ability that funding and delivering projects from grassroots level has in bringing people together. Ultimately we assert that funding and delivering a local improvement project provides a tangible reason for increased levels of interaction and engagement; catalyses the development of skills and knowledge necessary for success; and provides participants with a form ownership of their project and in turn, their wider localities.

There was less certainty as to the possible extent of these benefits, the ways in which they may emerge and whether/where they might be sustained beyond the initial capital injection from the Mayor. However, we would expect benefits such as community cohesion to be more evident in projects which benefit larger swathes of people within a locality, such as a park project. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that guaranteed use of a project following its completion provides incentive for involvement. Moreover, we'd expect broad-reaching community cohesion to continue beyond delivery with such a project as a new space for encounter and engagement is created.

With regard to delivery barriers and programme alterations, we expect to a greater proportion of projects from areas with limited levels of deprivation or from newer residents and/or communities with greater socioeconomic capital within historically deprived areas. Given that the Programme, a the time of writing, is a pilot that involves finding new ways of working within City Hall, we also expect to see some dissatisfaction with the GLA role in the delivery process, and would expect to remedy this in moving the Programme into a long-term Regeneration Unit scheme.

The following provides a short review of existing literature and research to help frame the study before offering details on the methodological approach adopted for addressing the research questions. The main body of the paper first draws out findings based around community cohesion, capacity building and

the required pre-existing capacity, and project impacts on health and well-being; before considering the causality of crowdfunding vs. community action. Conclusions are then drawn and recommendations offered for improvements to the delivery of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme and its evaluation.

2.0 Existing literature and research

A reasonably new phenomenon in planning and regeneration, civic crowdfunding as yet has received little direct attention in academic and social research. Where research does exist, it appears limited geographically to initiatives in the United States, and by discipline to the realms of media, communications and technology, and economics. Thus, the majority of work on the impacts of civic crowdfunding remains tightly bound to an analysis of governmental financial savings, and/or the strengths and weaknesses of different online platforms. Analysis from sociology, political science or urbanism is particularly lacking, thus the below links existing crowdfunding literature from divergent disciplines with broader work on community-led regeneration and participatory planning.

In many ways crowdfunding development offers a significant opportunity in the public ownership of place (Nesta 2015). The GLA's Annual London Survey (2016) revealed the importance Londoners assign to being able to have a say in urban development, and the present high levels of dissatisfaction with opportunities to do so. Where crowdfunding also enables the delivery of projects, the process directly addresses this desire of Londoners. Ownership of place in a time of rapid urban change is a much-considered issue in academia and policy, and has been so for many decades. Indeed, 50 years ago, Lefebvre, in his seminal essay, theorised the possibility of transforming societal relations and reconfiguring everyday urban experience through 'the right to the city' (1968). For Lefebvre, this 'right' was for all those whom lived in a city to contribute to and experience space (Purcell 2002). Later, this contribution and experience was considered in terms of the production of space itself, which, according to Lefebvre, when left to groups of power induces a social homogenisation of space (Lefebvre 1991). By (re-)placing local urban development into the hands of a given area's residents, and through its broad, web-based funding bringing with it a greater level of decision making power, legitimacy of this power, and the provision of largely unprecedented numbers of people or organisations with a stake in a given development; civic crowdfunding, and its new definition of ownership of space (Ratti and Claudel 2014), appears to enable "renewed access to urban life" (Lefebvre 1968:120).

The most commonly discussed economic impacts of civic crowdfunding for government are largely intuitive. In a time of increasing responsibility and dwindling resources in local government (Tallon 2013), civic-crowdfunding can work in a similar way to public-private partnerships, enabling places to remain or become distinctive and competitive in the face of resource cuts (Ward 2006), relieving pressure on local government budgets (Miglietta et al. 2013). Presently less discussed in this regard, and arguably more relevant for the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme, is an economic role not of subsidy, but of additionality to funds sourced from elsewhere; funds which would likely emerge with or without

government involvement during the present moment of increased traction of alternative finance processes (Zhang et al. 2015). Through small-grants or match funding, governments can play a role in contributing to efforts led by individuals, businesses or local groups.

A further interesting conceptualisation of civic crowdfunding's economic basis is the claim that civic crowdfunding presents a new method for the private provision of public goods. Hudik and Chovanculiak (2016) suggest civic crowdfunding is an important development in the private provision of public goods as it overcomes the typical problems associated with this: organisation, communications, and promotion costs are minimised through use of the online platform; funders can see others contributing to a project, thus minimising the assurance problem; and since many people need to contribute to a project for its realisation, opportunities to free-ride are lessened. This then, again indicates the potential for a declining government role in the private provision of public goods (Ibid.). However, Bernholz et al. note that rather than the government role decline with the onset of civic crowdfunding, a new importance of "visibility, transparency and scrutiny at least on par with other democratic decision making procedures" (2016:2) emerges because of the opportunity to unfairly or undemocratically alter public space. Thus, the role of the state must not be to absolve responsibility, but to ensure best practice in an alternative and more participatory and public financing system. Indeed, Miglietta et al. (2013) note that where the government responds to the requirement for a changing role, civic crowdfunding can "create new liaisons amongst local government and citizens … conciliating prospects of local governments with taxpayers' expectations" (2013:9).

Beyond economics, civic crowdfunding (and crowdsourcing) offers opportunities for those who become active agents of delivery to benefit from a range of 'softer' social impacts. Indeed Zuckerman (2012) notes that civic crowdfunding has the capacity to lead to a multitude of non-financial benefits. These include creating partnerships between citizens, business and local governments; placing citizens into the decision-making role; building stronger communities; increasing civic pride; knowledge and capacity building; and strengthening the connection between people and their environments (Zuckerman 2012; Stiver et al. 2015). However, as Nesta (2016) have noted, there is a paucity of research on the non-financial benefits of civic-crowdfunding. However, the benefits of community-led regeneration are well-researched and documented, with 'community studies' making up a large part of urban planning theory and practice. Here, it is noted that community activism in planning and regeneration, and the advent of bottom-up 'tactical urbanism' provide promising new methods for urban transformation, offering a new way to gain public, private and government support for investing in projects (Lydon and Garcia 2015).

Neighbourhood planning too has been the centre of much academic and policy interest, with particular focus on the benefits of knowledge and education, and development by design, which ultimately lead to

greater levels of local empowerment (Gallent and Robinson 2012). A recent GLA research paper (2015) on participation in formal planning processes noted that knowledge of the planning process and confidence in outputs and outcomes have a significant impact on levels of public involvement. Grass-roots, community-based planning and urban development have the capacity to better meet these requirements through the learning-by-doing process (Gallent and Robinson 2012). This is indicative of Arnstein's 1969 study, in which she developed a 'ladder of participation', outlining how meaningful participation needs to focus on the redistribution of power. Ultimately it was suggested that community participation in local government decision making which fails to educate or induce action would be placed at the bottom rung of the ladder (Ibid.). Tactical urbanism and other forms of grass-roots, community action which work alongside or attempt to subvert the formal planning process would be placed higher on the ladder, facilitating opportunities for consensus building, decision making, project management and action. Later, this was developed this with regard to architecture and development, outlining the importance of granting citizens an opportunity to define local problems and design solutions to overcome them (Till 2005) – a historically difficult practice to achieve due to time and resource requirements and the technocratic nature of built environment disciplines.

That is not to suggest that crowdfunding and crowdsourcing civic improvements and community-led regeneration more generally are not without their limitations. Whilst benefits appear irrefutable, and undoubtedly emerge in some way in all civic crowdfunding initiatives, the case is also presented for the drain that such a method of urban development can have on a community. These may be the oft-unanticipated demands of crowdfunding work, such as intensity of time and human capital and the necessity of specific skills (Cordova et al. 2015). Moreover, Zuckerman (2012) warns that civic crowdfunding, by its very nature, is more like to emerge in better-off communities. In these wealthier areas, there is both the financial capacity to fund such projects, and a greater amount of leisure time and relevant knowledge to turn funding into something tangible. This has the potential to create a 'social wedge', whereby government tax savings disproportionately benefit the wealthy, whilst service reductions harm the poor (Ibid.).

In the UK setting and especially in London, the 'social wedge' may be less of a concern due to the policy push on 'social mixing' since 1997, which sees a variety of socio-economic groups and cultural backgrounds living in close proximity to each other. However, this may present a separate but related (and potentially more problematic) consideration. Social mixing is oft discussed in relation to spatial conflict and the ascension of a new civic norm (Centner 2008). Here, changing standards of taste begin to dominate and new communities, under the guise of social mixing, desire separation from those who preceded them (Bell and Jayne 2010). Therefore, in a time of social-mixing, changing aspirations and spatial conflict, questions emerge about what a 'community' is and whether, when crowdfunding regeneration projects, divergent ideas for the use of space can be reconciled. This spatial conflict may be heightened by the crowdfund itself, since crowdfunding is at present entirely centred in traditional

currency. In traditional crowdfunding processes, one ultimately votes with their personal capital, undermining democracy. Thus another role for government emerges in ensuring that system design features are able to capture support for projects without discriminating on the premise of access to finance.

Brent (2004) asks what 'community' means with regard to planning and regeneration, supposing the reality of any given community is little more than an illusion, with the legitimacy of one public over another needing close attention in a time of multiple divergent *publics*. Developing this, a wealth of literature errs on the side of caution with regard to planning consultation processes for development management and policy, community forums, homeowners associations and community councils, recognizing their capacity to facilitate a tyranny of the majority and force consensus (See Flyvberg 2000; Davies 2001; McKenzie 1994; Purcell 2009). This is primarily based on two key premises: Firstly that communities will inevitably include members with individualistic motives who attempt to take control of organisation initiatives (Campbell 2005), and secondly that consensus building, a requirement for 'post-political'[1] community-based action will inevitably script out oppositional voices (Allmendinger and Haughton 2012), creating an echo chamber for an idea or belief to develop in.

This echo chamber may be particularly problematic with regards to civic crowdfunding, as those with greater or more 'legitimate' claims to space within any given community, can use and subsequently grow their economic, cultural and symbolic powers, enabling them greater leverage in deciding on the pathways for the development of public and/or civic space (Nesta 2015). This is heightened further by the opportunity cost of land-use, implicit in any urban development project. Thus far from democratising the public sphere, influence in decisions with regard to use of local spaces can become concentrated in the hands of a few, and may not represent the divergent needs of other groups within a community (Ibid.). However, this too may enable alternative solutions, where citizens define problems and address them through the use of their own local knowledge (Till 2005).

In discussing civic technology more broadly, mySociety (2015) note a bias in users, whom tend to be educated, white and largely male. This is a result of their "high political and personal efficacy in both offline and online capacity" (mySociety 2015:19). Moreover, Bernholz et al. (2016) warn against over-emphasising the participatory or engagement activities that result from crowdfunding, in which pledging can atomize rather than build communities. Indeed, rather than producing improved relationships or

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[1] The 'post-political' was developed by Eric Swyngedouw in the early 2000s drawing on the philosophy of Ranciere, and refers to a state of governance typified by broad ranging institutions and organisations operating through a range of scales, and mobilising a wide variety of actors. Rather than increasing political action and democracy as might be expected through a broader institutional and governmental base, the post-political annuls democracy by requiring consensus, demotivating participation and limiting contestation and disagreement.

social connections, the process has the potential to undermine communities through the removal of a negotiating table (Ibid.).

Where crowdfunding refers to and is practiced as "a collective effort by people who network and pool their money together … in order to invest in and support efforts initiated by other people or organisations" (Ordanini et al. 2011:444), the problems with 'community' or the likelihood of atomization may be lessened due to the greater extent of a project's reach, often with an ability to envelope a wider scope of community, both in geography and heterogeneity. Ultimately, crowdfunding enables a greater number of people to have access to a stake (of variable size) in any given project, without holding traditional economic or decision-making power. Moreover, the financial or time resources that project backers put into crowdfunded/sourced projects forces an accountability in management and delivery that goes beyond other approaches to community participation in planning, loosening the grip of the small circle of 'usual suspects' (Zuckerman 2012). Thus if projects do manage to capture diversity of community, the likelihood of project delivery being in the *collective* interest is increased.

Related, the internet-based element of crowdfunding (and crowdsourcing) enables different levels of engagement with projects, ranging from funding through to concept design, decision making and project management (Ratti and Claudel 2014). This can help to overcome time and other constraints that may limit involvement in traditional community-based development projects (Stiver et al. 2014). It is however, important to note the necessity of an internet connection in civic crowdfunding, and scholars and policy researchers have begun to question the inclusiveness of a web-based approach to urban re-development (Selwyn 2002). Indeed, Nesta (2015) note that those on civic crowdfunding platforms tend to be those who are already online and understand how crowdfunding works. Moreover, they're also likely to be politically aware and participate in government and politics through other means (mySociety 2015). This has the potential to implicate the homogenous control earlier warned of by Lefebvre (1991). However, Stiver et al. (2015) note that civic crowdfunding is a unique form of planning and regeneration participation, creating conditions for the successful intermingling of the online and offline, since "community propels project activity, [and therefore] both online *and* offline communities are a distinguishing feature of civic crowdfunding" (Stiver et al. 2014:262).

3.0 Methodology

Some quantitative scoping work was undertaken by the Regeneration Unit prior to the period of formal research, for which qualitative methods were considered the most appropriate. It was decided qualitative methodology would best address research questions which focused on social benefits, experiences, and opinions. Traditional qualitative methods were also deemed to be the most time efficient and straightforward given the retrospective element of the work. Research engaged with a number of round 1 and round 2 beneficiaries of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme, and took place on site.

4.1 Research design and analysis

Semi-structured interviews are an important and oft-used method in social research since they have a unique ability to gather a large amount of information in a relatively small space of time. Moreover, the semi-structured nature gives participants some ability to dictate the direction of the interview, whilst the researcher's role is one of guidance into overarching topics and themes. This is an important benefit of the semi-structured interview; limiting researcher bias since participants have some ability to discuss what they deem is important to them. When, as in this case, the semi-structured interview was preceded by a participant led site tour, the position of the researcher is resituated and the dialectic of researcher and researched broken down.

The site tour and situation within the project location added a further ethnographic element to the research, enabling the researcher to witness first hand community interaction and engagement, and civic pride. By combining the more formal semi-structured interview with the ethnographic observational field work, the interplay of experience and perception was better attended to. This assisted validity of the interview data, enabling the researcher to form a fuller and more accurate report of (social) life around projects and project groups.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed and thematically coded by the researcher in-house into 6 themes and 30 sub-themes. Hybrid coding was carried out using induction and deduction to develop themes. Since induction refers to data driven analysis and deduction is grounded in theoretical knowledge and understanding, the hybrid approach allowed for the combining of existing literature and primary data in coding in an iterative and reflexive process. Iterations on the development of themes and sub-themes were more pertinent in this case due to the understudied nature of civic crowdfunding.

Two minor pieces of quantitative research were also consulted in the production of the following report. Firstly, a quantitative scoping survey was carried out by the Regeneration Unit Prior to the qualitative research. This, largely for their own records, consisted of a short survey sent electronically to all round 1 and 2 participants, focusing on the experience of the GLA and Spacehive processes. The survey had a convergence rate of 40%, and was analysed by the Regeneration Unit. Secondly, alongside the qualitative research, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was used to produce maps to provide a spatial understand of pilot programme applicants and beneficiaries against the 2015 index multiple deprivation (IMD)[2].

4.2 Sampling

Given that the research was retrospective, the sample had to be drawn from round 1 and 2 beneficiaries. Those who responded to the aforementioned survey sent to beneficiaries of the fund by the Regeneration Unit were deemed to indicate likely good reception of follow up research work. Thus, survey respondents were contacted first. Otherwise, a mix of round 1 and round 2 projects were sampled. Other characteristics of project groups (such as whether projects improved public realm, provided work space, facilitated events etc.) were not taken into account in the sampling process though this was initially favoured. Ultimately, this was constrained by the difficulty in gaining access to project groups within the short time frame allocated for the field research portion of the study, which totalled 10 working days.

The final sample (figure 1) consisted of 7 beneficiaries, spanning project type, geography, and funding amount, though is not a balanced representation of all 37 beneficiaries. Notably, there was no required crowdfunding element beyond the Mayor's fund for Round 1 projects, and 25% funding was introduced in the delivery of round 2. The small sample limits the extent to which findings can be generalised across projects.

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[2] IMD is created by cross-referencing proxy measures for deprivation, including income deprivation (children and adults); health deprivation; crime; employment deprivation; and living environment.

Round 1				
Name	**Project type**	**Location**	**GLA finance**	**No. of backers**
Carnaval del Pueblo	Public realm/high street improvements	East Street, LB Southwark	£20,000	6
ReNew New Eltham	Public realm/high street improvements	New Eltham, RB Greenwich	£15,500	3
Museum of the Future/ The Community Kitchen	Community centre	Surbiton, RB Kingston	£35,500 (R1 and R2)	63 (R1 and R2)
Round 2				
Name	**Project type**	**Location**	**GLA finance**	**No. of backers**
Peckham Coal Line	Park/public space development	Peckham, LB Southwark	£20,000	928
Hello Hoxton High Street	Public realm/high street improvements	Hoxton, LB Hackney	£19,000	188
Twist on Station Rise	Markets	Tulse Hill, LB Lambeth	£14,000	81
Wanstead Playground	Park/public space development	Wanstead, LB Redbridge	£11,000	339

Figure 1: Table showing research participants and their project characteristics

4.3 Methodological limitations

Retrospective research and its dependence on memory recall raises questions regarding the validity of the collected data and inevitable uncertainty around truth and accuracy. Moreover, the semi-structured interview method, whilst having a number of benefits, is problematic in its reinforcement of the researcher-researched relationship. This relationship, and the way in which it is formed can mean responses will vary depending on the rapport that is built between the two parties, and as a result of the way in which participants perceive the interviewer. For example, it was noted that interviewees responded positively to the fact that the researcher was not a member of the Regeneration Unit, though they were likely still acutely aware that the she was a member of GLA staff. However, as previously

mentioned, the participant led site visit helped to disrupt this relationship in some way. It is impossible to measure these impacts, but consistency in sharing information and with the content of the interview would have also helped limit this problem.

Limitations are also the product of the sample. Opportunity sampling used for the scoping survey and the main period of qualitative research is likely to have bias in that willing respondents are likely to have had a particularly good experience or a particularly bad experience of the programme. Sampling in this way may have limited the opportunity to hear from groups who had standard or variable experiences of the programme.

4.0 Findings

The thematic analysis process presented a range of findings that address the research questions. Impetus herein is placed on an understanding of the Crowdfunding Programme's impacts on community cohesion and democratisation; the development of and requirement to have certain skills and knowledges; and impacts on participants' health and well-being.

5.1 Community cohesion and democratisation

Communities are at the centre of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme, which is primarily an initiative to enable Londoners to be part of regeneration through meaningful involvement in the bottom-up development of the city. With campaigns developed and put forward by pre-existing community groups or through especially established organisations, the Programme is playing an important role in bringing people together over a shared interest in improving their locality, whilst crowdfunding a project itself acts as a new method of participation, with, in one case, more than 900 people engaging in a project through the crowdfunding process.

Of the sample of project groups used for this research, four were pre-existing community groups, two were off-shoots from existing groups and one was an entirely new group created around a new idea for the locality. These differences appeared to have a limited impact on the extent of community reach and engagement for the respective projects, which instead seemed to align more closely with either the reach of core group members, the capacity that core group members had around campaigns and social media, or the type of project. This was best illustrated by the reach of a community centre project, a market project and a park project, each of which, by their nature, more significantly transgresses individualistic interests and as such appeared to encourage greater levels of participation. Generally expansion into respective communities has been good and assisted by the crowdfunding process whose success requires a strong following and high levels of community support, with one group noting that prior to the Programme their group had *"never really engaged"* and was *"really inward looking"*. More recently, they note they have entered a new phase of *"incredible engagement"*, linking up with the local interest society, local businesses, and a wide range of other interested organisations and individuals. This pattern was replicated across groups with another stating:

"We spent about 3 months engaging and building up a relationship with the community; getting people involved, making partnerships and so on. So when we launched our first Crowdfund […] lots of people

were behind us and part of the project"

The above example also exemplifies the role of building awareness in the community, which encourages both acceptance and further involvement, either through pledging or through direct action with a project group. One group noted that awareness building was central to the growth of their project group, and its expansion into different, lesser known parts of the wider locality and its residents:

"Local people caught wind of the project through the media and social media and started emailing asking how they could get involved and make it happen, and before we knew it we had 200, 300 emails from willing volunteers"

The process of awareness raising and building a successful project campaign which involved sharing project developments with the local community appeared to be central in building a cohesive community that came together behind a project. For one project situated within a very mixed community, building community cohesion was less about the crowdfund itself, and rather focused on strong communication surrounding the project's aims, its funding streams, and who its delivery was ultimately for. Whilst noting the project was first met with some hostility due to *"money being put into something that doesn't necessarily make life easier in an area where some people are struggling to survive"* , through communicating the financial sources of the project and the long term aims of the redevelopment, as well as hosting activities for the surrounding community that drew on the shared history embedded within the area, the project group was able to appease and integrate members of the diverse surrounding community. Ultimately, they noted:

"It's been so great to be part of something that's brought so many different types of community together … these people are people who have been here their whole lives and they can see this is for them, and they can be part of it."

Beyond resident to resident engagement, projects delivered through the Crowdfunding Programme play an important role in catalysing partnerships with and between local businesses, as well as the local council and Councillors. This is significant in its longer term impacts for the redistribution of community power and capital (see Dahl 1960). This effect comes both through the crowdfund process in which dominant groups or organisations can and tend to support successful projects, as well as through face to face interaction and verbal offers of support. As one group put it whilst referring to the wealth of community and financial support they'd received: *"we have confidence in our voice as equals at a table that would otherwise be incredibly power laden."* Arguably, this is akin to the weight of a well-signed

petition. Undoubtedly, this claim to legitimacy is greater where those involved (rather than just benefit as in the example above) are varied and diverse, encompassing a broad conceptualisation of 'community'. However, participants themselves are quick to point out that reaching the 'hard-to-reach' is still a difficulty, even in bottom-up development methods.

"There's a self-selecting crowd who are just the same as us [young, white, middle-class], who are super engaged and that kind of stuff and will actively come along to things […] but we know for the project to be successful we have to be inclusive."

In an attempt to address the issue of diversity, one group made entirely of *"white middle-class mums"* specifically put a call out for involvement from the large Asian population in the area, yet had no uptake from members of this group. Another noted the importance of working with Tenants and Residents Associations and other pre-existing groups with a diversity of members, though too made it clear that this was more difficult than had been anticipated. Throughout the research process, all project leads and participants met by the researcher were white, and based on proxies such as education level and occupation; all were considered to be of a higher social grade (B or C1). No participant appeared to fit into D or E groups. This may be compounded by the geographies from which applications to the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme come from, illustrated spatially on the following page (figure 2), and later in a table (figure 3).

Thus, whilst community engagement in the delivery process offers new and engaging ways of participating in planning and regeneration, and effectively brings communities together over a shared interest, there is inevitable bias in those who are directly involved and who pledge to projects, despite attempts by project groups to overcome it. As one group reflected:

"The crowdfund worked here because of the environment we live in. It's a small community, it's affluent, there are high net-worth individuals, and there's a lot of pride in where we live".

This market-led outcome of the crowdfunding process then, indicates a pressing role for GLA Regeneration and public bodies moving forwards with civic crowdfunding: A greater emphasis should be placed on supporting underrepresented groups in their applications for public funding, assisting with capacity building and providing increased light-touch support prior to the project selection process.

Applications to the Mayor's Crowdfunding Pilot in R1 and R2

- R1 Successful (16)
- R1 Unsuccessful (64)
- R2 Successful (20)
- R2 Unsuccesful (43)

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015

Of LSOAs in England

- In 5% most deprived (52)
- In 5-10% most deprived (222)
- In 10-20% most deprived (815)
- In 20-50% most deprived (1,964)
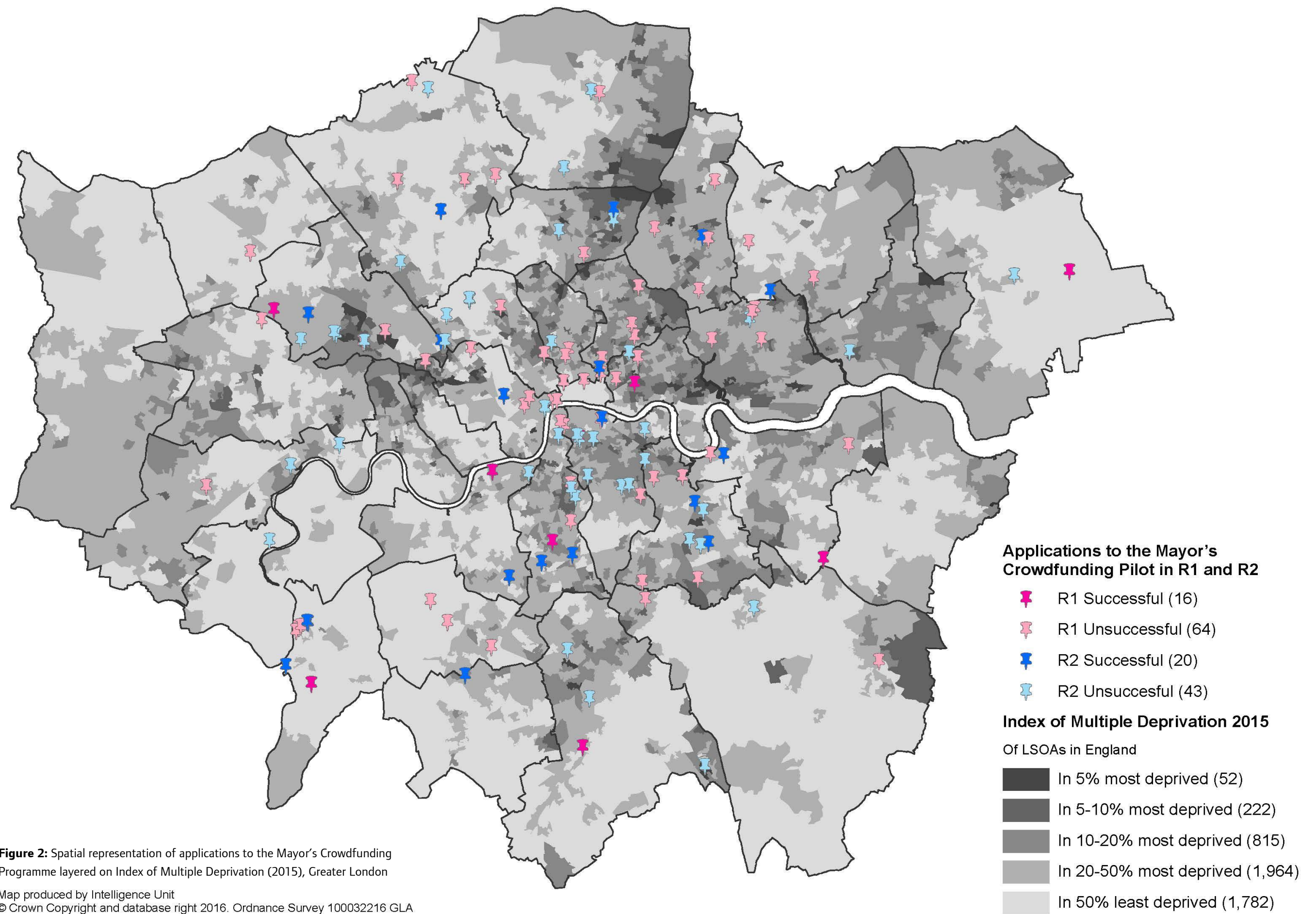- In 50% least deprived (1,782)

Figure 2: Spatial representation of applications to the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme layered on Index of Multiple Deprivation (2015), Greater London

Map produced by Intelligence Unit
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Without these types of government support in growing the number of applications from areas of deprivation and more deprived groups, there is a potential for civic projects delivered through a crowdfunding process to operate within a 'civic echo chamber' due to group homogeneity, making the potential of a false presumption of widespread and diverse support (such as 900 backers) a possibility. This links to a wealth of literature that considers tyranny in participatory decision-making (see Cooke and Kothari 2000). Indeed mySociety note of digital democracy "if tools are predominantly being used by a homogenous group already dominant in society, this has the potential to skew … practical interventions in favour of this dominant group, at the same time compounding disadvantage amongst less dominant groups in society" (2015:19).

This, when considered in the civic context of this research reasserts and develops Centner's (2008) claim that certain groups can draw on their privilege to dominate space in a time of changing civic norms and tastes through use, and demonstrated here through development (see also Bell and Jayne 2010). Arguably, without an active local government presence in the crowdfunding process, to monitor diversity of project groups and their supporters, those with a quieter voice within spatial conflicts and contested civic norms will see their opinions absolved.

Despite potential problems regarding the homogeneity of backers or applicants (or perhaps resulting from it), the nature of engagement that the crowdfunding process requires and, subsequently the type of community that is more likely engage with it helps address a significant issue in local government and urban development democracy: It seems to appeal to a demographic that may be younger than those traditionally engaged, and as such are unlikely to be homeowners[3]. Tenure has long been considered a significant issue in planning participation discussions, with homeownership considered a key motivation to participate in civic decision making, though, it is also noted that homeowners tend to be more individualistic in their activity (Lundqvist 1998). Indeed, a 2015 GLA publication on participation in matters of the built environment revealed that NIMBYism was a significant driver of participation in civic matters because of home owners' more long-term attachment to place. Whilst young renters who engage with the Mayors Crowdfunding Programme's projects may still be of a higher social grade and be politically minded in their careers and social lives, their involvement in urban redevelopment is significant.

Clearly crowdfunding catalyses people within divergent communities to come together for positive collective change, rather than through individualistic motives. This is to a much greater extent than

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[3] Though ages of project leads and group members in this research are mixed, online research of applications and non-participant observation at Crowdfund London events run by the GLA are both indicative of a younger demographic than in traditional planning and regeneration participation meetings.

traditional grant based funding for projects due to the social engagement required to grow project finances. However, reaching the hard-to-reach or less dominant groups remains a challenge.

5.2 Capacity building: Developing or requiring new skills and knowledge?

Unsurprisingly, those who deliver projects funded through the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme undergo an extensive journey of capacity building throughout the process. For many, it may be their first experience of project management, regeneration and planning, finance and budgeting, campaigning, and indeed crowdfunding. As a result, the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme presents opportunities for participants to develop personally and professionally.

Beyond the immediate impacts of growing skills and knowledge, building capacity has three major knock-on impacts. Firstly, it helps the sustainability and longevity of the projects, best illustrated by a project lead who, as a method of sustainably raising funds to sustain the project in the long-term, instigated a grass-roots Business Association. Working in a similar way to a formal Business Improvement District (BID), 22 businesses on the high street now pay £60 per annum in to a common fund which is used to maintain different elements of the project and pay for community events. Standard critique of (BID) errs caution regarding an imbalance of power between individuals, community groups and larger, profit driven organisations, which may cause a disruption in the heterogeneity of the production of space as discussed by Lefebvre (1991). However, in this case, the local and grass-roots element of the association, managed by the community group, should provide a sufficient barrier to this, and moreover, enables local business to have a voice in their area's development .

Secondly, skills improvements can have real impacts on career progression and transformation. Almost all participants referred to the programme as having a positive impact in their career, with several including the management of the process on their CV and in career based discussions. One participant revealed that one of her project teammates had recently been offered a job in an entirely different industry to his previous one as a result of the work. She then followed this up by detailing how the project was opening doors for each individual involved. Outside of formal employment for several years, another participant noted that her Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme project had become a central part of her job applications, with the skills granting her greater confidence in these applications. Though yet to find a position, she stated:

"I've raised £100,000 from various sources in a year […] I know this project is helping me."

Thirdly, developing knowledge of the regeneration and the planning process has been a significant impact of many projects, as well as being integral to their success. In a planning system such as England and Wales', characterised by multiple layers and piecemeal decision making rather than hard and fast 'rules', knowledge of it is integral to effective participation (GLA 2015; Irvin and Stansbury 2000). Since knowledge enables participation, and participation in turn democratises the planning process, this impact should not be overlooked. As noted in the Borough of Southwark:

"A lot of people are getting more attuned to planning and regeneration as a result of this. They're […] understanding what it means to them, learning how things should be done and commenting on applications or going to community forums."

Whilst this example (of many) should not be understated, they do have the potential to fall victim to the concerns outlined in literature that discuss group homogeneity or the problem of 'usual suspects' – even where this might be made up of new individuals (see mySociety 2015; Brent 2004; Campbell 2005). This has been overcome by one project group, whose monthly market always has a table for the local interest group, representatives from which answer questions and educate shoppers – thus reaching beyond project participants into the wider community – on planned changes to the area, and how they can be involved in the process. She added:

"Councillors have also come down to their stall to chat to people. It has become a centre for education and community power in that sense".

Though a multitude of skills and knowledge can evidently be gained through taking part in the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme, a certain capacity is required to get started, which may cause disparities in the applications that emerge on the Mayor's Hive. The two most significant of these capacities are some level of political engagement or governance knowledge, adeptly highlighted by three project groups who were approached by local Councillors with the idea of starting a campaign on the Mayor's hive; and some grasp of technology: ultimately being 'online'. These barriers to partaking in the Programme as it is currently run could be addressed by additional support from the Regeneration Unit. Yet, beyond these, more specific skills can be integral to running a successful campaign. A pre-existing understanding of social media, project management, and finance was cited by all participants as integral to their success, with one discussing the ways in which team members' past careers in law, accounting and local government enabled the smooth running of the process, and meant ironing out mistakes quickly. Another spoke of the benefit of having a range of professionals in their team, making the process *"iterative"* and one where the team was *"constantly learning from each other"*.

This knowledge sharing is undoubtedly a positive element of the programme and is akin to *crowdsourcing* skills, however it raises equity issues. Without these skills – more likely to lack amongst deprived groups – the time cost of attempting to manage a community-based regeneration project may be too great to be viable. This issue may be worsened by the increased likelihood of those from deprived groups working unsociable hours and having less leisure time overall. Indeed, of the participants in this study, four worked service sector office based jobs, whilst of the other three, one was a housewife, one was retired, and one was the owner of an SME. Limits of this sample are noted, but further scoping is required to see whether this pattern follows across all successful groups.

The reliance on capital or pound-based voting (Bernholz et al. 2016) – though to a lesser extent, existing capacity – subsequently means that successful campaigns and projects are more likely to emerge in wealthier areas. This can, to some extent, be noted spatially across London, where applications were least common from groups in London's most deprived areas, based on an Index of Multiple Deprivation (figure 3). Through involvement in the crowdfunding process, public bodies should, in theory, be able to exert a certain amount influence and support for applications from more deprived areas, either through directing funds to campaigns based in areas with higher deprivation, or providing more support or expertise where necessary. Interestingly, of all projects that have applied to the Mayor's hive, only those which have been backed by the Mayor have reached their target. Thus the amount of wealth in an area (shown through backers) seems to matter less to success than the Mayor's contribution.

It should be noted that in the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme, more projects are delivered in the 50% most deprived areas than 50% least deprived areas of London, and this needs to be upheld and developed as the programme progresses. At a finer-grain however, the most deprived areas (band A and B), do appear to suffer from disproportionate disinvestment through the Programme (see spatial representation, figure 2). Perhaps most interestingly is the apparent peak in applications and successful projects in band D. More research is required to fully understand the driver of this peak. One possible explanation is that within band D there are many high growth areas, including pockets of Dalston, Peckham, Camden Town, Aldgate, Walthamstow, Tulse Hill, Vauxhall, Crystal Palace and so on, in which a new and changing community brings with it skills, capacity and wealth that may not have existed previously.

Band	IMD 2015	R1 Successful	R1 Unsuccessful	R2 Successful	R2 Unsuccessful
A	In 5% most deprived	1	2	0	2
B	In 5-10% most deprived	1	3	2	4
C	In 10-20% most deprived	2	7	2	9
D	In 20-50% most deprived	7	39	9	23
E	In 50% least deprived	5	13	7	5
	Total	16	64	20	43

Figure 3: Chart showing applications and beneficiaries from areas of different levels of deprivation

5.3 Health, well-being and civic pride

Perceived improvements in health and well-being were a largely unanticipated effect of involvement with a project in the Mayor's Crowdfunding Pilot. Health benefits represent a social or non-financial impact that is not just at paucity in literature as much as it is completely devoid of consideration. However, research participants outlined a plethora of positive impacts on health and well-being – particularly mental health – that stemmed from the activity that falls out of the Crowdfunding Programme. One participant attributed the levelling of his bipolar disorder to be being involved in a project, as well as offering the following anecdote regarding an individual coming to be involved with the project work:

"I got an email from a woman whose husband had dementia; she had no support network and was really suffering great depression. She came down, spent time with us […] and later her colleagues told us how the group and what we do had completely changed her life"

Away from formal mental health conditions, all participants reported feelings of satisfaction through involvement in the project. Often this was a function of the greater social reach project delivery gave those involved within their wider community, providing a new and changing social life, unable to be crated through other means. Indeed one participant noted that she couldn't walk down the street without people saying 'hello' to her, giving her, and others a sense of belonging. The discussion of these expansive (and expanding) social networks was reiterated through field observation where the majority of research participants appeared to be at the centre of their respective communities, often stopping to

chat with local residents and businesses. This positive effect on social life is undoubtedly a two-way process, existing at the collective as well as the individual level. Indeed, participants spoke of group and wider community effects of making new friends, growing confidence, and the self-worth built through *"feeling you've done something good and helpful"*. One continued:

"It's exercised my brain […] and really made me feel like I can do things when I put my mind to it. I don't just feel like a mum anymore"

These well-being impacts also appeared to infiltrate into civic pride and an increased fondness for participants' and communities' respective localities. Since the area one spends their time is a significant part of their lives, taking pride in and being proud of that area can have important impacts on individual and collective wellbeing. Unlike other elements of wellbeing discussed above, civic pride and its impacts on the health and wellbeing of a given community is unique since it is usually derived from urban aesthetic rather than that social relations (see Collins 2016). Moreover, place-based intervention and civic pride are also central in improving feelings of safety in local areas, which too has knock-on effects for well-being. This was particularly evident through discussion with one group regarding a community member who would once actively avoid the site of the project, but since the programme feels safer and happier in the area. These ideas are particularly significant for GLA Regeneration more generally, since the approach adopted is generally a place-based one. As one project group noted:

"Part of our work has been putting benches back in. People thought the street drinkers would just come back, but they haven't because it's not a neglected place. It's a loved place that people feel proud of."

Beyond – but less common than – place-based intervention, civic pride can also emerge from and lead to social interaction and development. This might refer to feeling proud of coming from a certain community or community group, as well as pride in place stemming from the improved community relations in an area, a noted impact of the Programme (see 5.1). The ownership element facilitated through the crowdfund process also appears to have impacted civic pride with one group noting *"People really own this […] so they're really willing it to work and are really proud of what's happening"*. Data from the Regeneration Unit's beneficiary survey reaffirmed these links between civic pride and wellbeing, with one respondent noting the project had really *"put a spring in the step of the people who live in, work in and visit"* the area.

Despite these many positive impacts on health and well-being, one participant was quick to make clear that whilst the highs are high, *"when you feel sh*t, you feel really sh*it"*. Indeed, she went on to say that

the extreme time and resource demands of being part of a successful Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme group hangs as *"a bit of a shadow on these sort of community-led projects"*. This was reiterated by other project groups who felt that all-or-nothing characteristic of the Spacehive platform used by the Mayor left them feeling anxiety and stress *"like nothing felt before"*. Three Round 2 participants specifically attributed this stress to the length of the crowdfund period, and the painstaking process of watching numbers go up, and having to sit through *"a demoralising dip in the middle"*.

The differences between negative health impacts felt by Round 1 and Round 2 participants indicate that the crowdfund itself (not a requirement for funding in Round 1) rather than the project delivery process is responsible for the majority of the stress and anxiety felt. However, for one participant in particular, this stress didn't stop at the close of the crowdfund, and was in fact worsened at close where £600 was lost because of a lack of insurance on the system to cover failed payment methods. Data from the Regeneration Unit's survey reaffirmed this grievance, and data from the Spacehive team revealed 5.5% of the total amount of money pledged to projects backed by the GLA as part of the Crowdfunding Programme failed.

Health and well-being effects emerging from involvement in civic crowdfunding projects are a significant and important element for further study.

5.0 Conclusions

The social impacts of the Crowdfunding Pilot are extensive and appear to infiltrate into all aspects of participants' lives, as well as throughout the communities in which projects are situated. These include improved community cohesion and democratisation in the urban re-development process, growth of skills and knowledge that contribute to personal and professional development, as well as opening up local government processes to a wider and less-active section of the population, and improved outlook on life, partly manifest through civic pride and an improved sense of place, as well as through a project delivery process that involves making friends, growing networks, and feeling part of something bigger than oneself.

There are some challenges to be overcome that sit alongside these impacts – namely dominance of certain groups over others, intense time and skills requirement to the point of social exclusion, and fatigue and stress. However, despite these drawbacks, the thinking behind the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme is sound, and its delivery in rounds 1 and 2 has been good, with research conducted for this study indicating net overall satisfaction and generally, an excitement for an emerging new method of local government action and deliver, and local engagement. Overcoming and learning from challenges in the Programme's development has been significant for understanding the method being employed.

Whilst it may be easy to suggest that a crowdfunding programme developed and/or promoted by a public body is indicative of a further roll back of the state, the GLA's pilot Programme highlights how a new, rather than reduced, role for local government is being carved out. This role centres around facilitating and protecting equity and inclusion within a broader context of alternative finance and market-led approaches to development projects. Indeed, it appears that without government involvement in crowdfunding schemes – particularly those which deal with issues as contested as land-use change – equity and involvement of deprived groups or those in deprived areas my by compromised.

The Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme never intended to position itself as an alternative to strategic regeneration efforts that are traditionally delivered by the GLA, but rather a supplement to these methods, which effectively presents a new model of engagement around the built environment, providing a more collaborative and inclusive approach to regeneration. This model, where citizens can wholesale deliver a project or engage through pledging a small amount of money to a project in their local area and beyond provides enables individuals to engage in a proactive rather than reactive manner, can help develop community cohesion and civic pride, and through the process of delivery, plays an educative function which appears, in our cases, to lead to knock-on democratisation.

Ultimately, it is the communities and their willing, meaningful engagement and energy that drives the success of the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme and the plethora of positive social impacts that have emerged throughout Rounds 1 and 2. Crowdfunding as a model of financing projects is likely only to increase over time, with or without state involvement, thus the GLA is playing and will continue to play a fundamental role in upholding social equity, building capacity and ensuring appropriate use of land and infrastructure. With some carefully considered modifications for the programme and appropriate resourcing of the programme long-term, the positive social impacts can continue to be felt across London's geography and communities moving forwards. Moreover, the GLA's commitment to sensitively developing and refining such a programme should provide a best practice example for other regional or local governments' inception of similar initiatives, highlighting that crowdfunding is not a matter of reduced government action, but alternative government action in a time of emerging alternative finance.

6.0 Recommendations

Recommendations were made and presented internally to the commissioning Unit, and are only and entirely the result of the findings from the research outlined above. Recommendations are inevitably a product of their methodology, and therefore should be considered alongside the methodological determinants of the research, outlined in section 4.0. The research and analysis has identified a range of issues that may improve the Mayor's Crowdfunding Programme. These pertain to the long term sustainable and equitable success of the programme through improving accessibility, increasing opportunities for project support, and encouraging ongoing research and evaluation.

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