



HORNSEY TOWN HALL: SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON COMMUNITY USE AND ACCESS

Introduction

This paper summarises the feedback received from residents during a consultation held by the Hornsey Town Hall Creative Trust during Spring 2015, to inform the new procurement process for the Town Hall.

It has been developed through a process of community consultation involving over 300 local people and builds on previous consultations undertaken by the Trust over recent years. The procurement process will set out the need for bidders to provide community use and access to the building as part of their plans for the Town Hall. There is a lot of community interest in the future of the building and the Trust ran a consultation process designed to explore with residents what types of community use and access they would like to see within the overall plan for the building. It is designed not as a list of demands but as a range of uses that we hope developers / operators will respond to positively in order to deliver a vibrant, accessible place in the heart of Crouch End.

Context

Hornsey Town Hall Creative Trust (HTHCT) is an independent buildings preservation trust, formed in 2007 to work with Haringey Council to ensure a sustainable future for Hornsey Town Hall that also reflects community aspirations for the use of the building.

The local community has long voiced its concerns for the long term future of the building. In 2004 there was a high-profile campaign organised by local people under the banner “Crouch End for People” concerned about the state of the building. As a result, Haringey Council asked a number of local residents to form an Advisory Panel to act as a conduit to the community. This developed into a more formal Community Partnership Board with ward councillors also represented, and then the charitable company limited by guarantee which is today’s Trust.

The appetite for community access to and use of Hornsey Town Hall has been consistent over the years and is very evident and is reflected in this report. There is an opportunity to deliver a world class regeneration scheme that has a significant impact not just in the borough of Haringey but in London and further afield. It should also harness the creative energy and talent in the local community whose ambitions match the Trust’s vision for HTH:

“To create a world class model of civic renaissance, an arena for all that harnesses the spirit of progress, community, creativity and enterprise for future generations in Haringey, London and beyond.”



HTHCT has been working with LBH to find a sustainable future for HTH. The Trust has played an active role for over ten years, in all previous consultations including the planning application in 2010, and as a member of, amongst others, the HTH Joint Working Party Groups, Steering Groups, Options Appraisal Groups and the Interim Uses Group.

Consultation process

This consultation took place in April and May 2015. The process was designed and delivered by Hornsey Town Hall Creative Trust. It consisted of:

- 2 stakeholder workshops, attended by 22 people representing 12 local organisations¹
- Online questionnaire asking people for their overall aspirations for the Town Hall, their 4 top choices of uses from a list of 16 options, reasons behind their choices, plus any further comments. 272 people completed the questionnaire
- Public workshop attended by 38 people where their ideas for potential uses were discussed (including what spaces these would require, benefits and challenges). In addition, uses and management of the Town Hall square, and appetite for community management of the Town Hall were also discussed.

The online questionnaire and agenda for the stakeholder and public workshops can be found in Appendix 1.

The level of participation in a very time-limited consultation was high, reflecting the iconic status that the Town Hall has for the community in Crouch End. People's hopes for the future of the building are great, tempered with a fear that the Town Hall will be commercialised to such an extent that the community will have little or no access to the building.

The community has a clearly-articulated expectation that prospective operators will work with the community to deliver a first class offer that reflects these aspirations.

Guiding Principles

From the workshops and responses to the questionnaire, a series of guiding principles have been drawn out that should inform decisions about the future use of Hornsey Town Hall.

- Any future plan should restore the Town Hall to its former glory and be financially sustainable, ensuring that this world class building is preserved for the use and enjoyment of future generations

¹ Organisations represented: Crouch End Neighbourhood Forum, Crouch End Festival, HTH Arts Centre, Crouch End Players, The Hub Crouch End, OpinioN8, Hornsey Vale Community Centre, Hornsey Historical Society, Transition Crouch End, GMTRA and CASCH Residents Associations, and Crouch End Open Studios.



- The community must be fully involved in the future of Hornsey Town Hall and the process must be open and transparent, within the constraints of a formal tender process
- Potential developers/operators must engage with and respond to the needs and aspirations of the local community
- We should be ambitious for Hornsey Town Hall – it is an iconic building of international architectural importance and its uses should reflect its status
- The renewal of the Town Hall is a regeneration project which should bring social, economic and cultural benefit to the local and wider area
- It should be sustainable in the long term, balancing the need for income to maintain the building and its operation with community benefit
- The project should deliver the widest possible range of access within a financially sustainable operation
- There should be an holistic approach to the development of the site, joining up the Town Hall and the Town Hall Square.

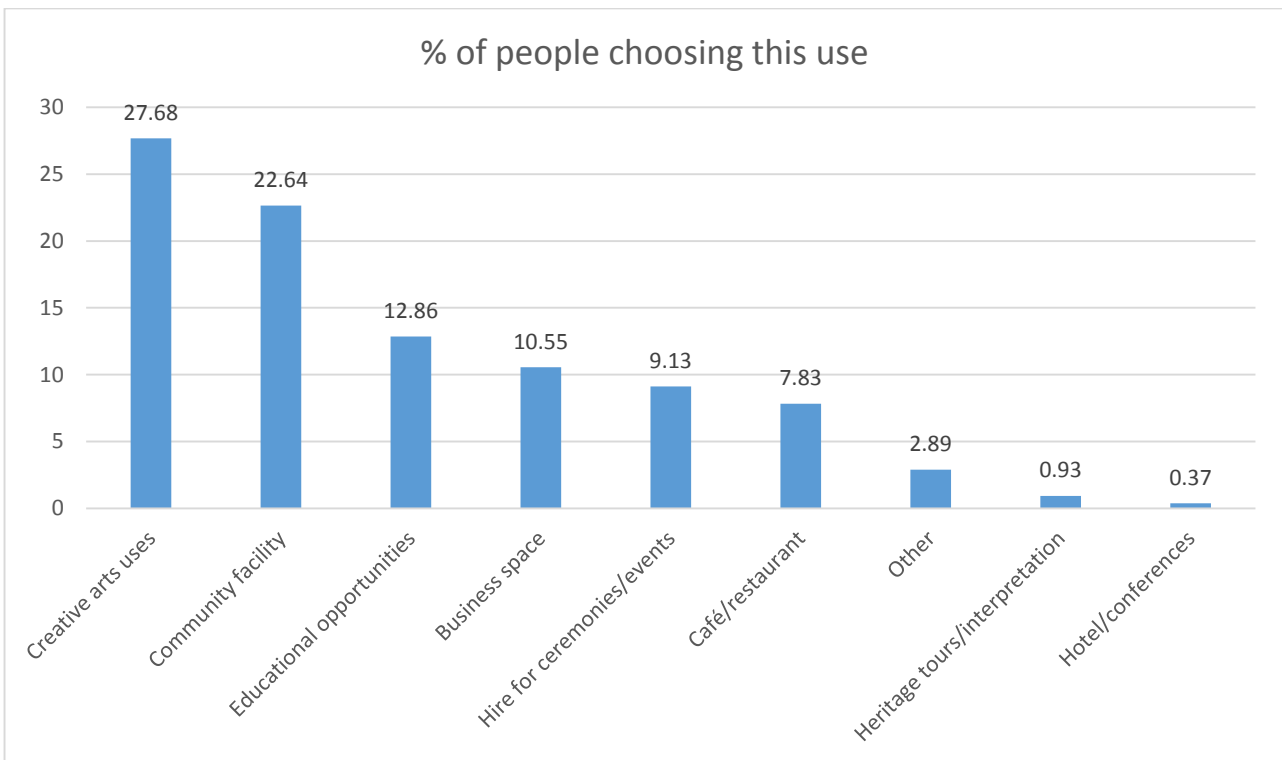
Consultees' priorities for the community use aspects of the Town Hall

The Trust has an open mind about what the mix of future uses for the Town Hall should be. However, we are clear that any future development should include a variety of opportunities for the community to engage with the Town Hall.

In the procurement process, bidders are asked to set out proposals for “community use and access”. We asked the community what their priorities would be for this community use aspect of a future development and the following pages summarise what we heard from the community.

We fully recognise that not all of these aspirations are likely to be met, but we hope that these responses provide a clear and helpful sense of local priorities for the community use and access aspects of the future operating model for the building.

The sections below summarise the types of community uses that people would like to see as part of the offer in the Town Hall. As set out above, these uses are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the diversity of uses would add to the vibrancy of the building and increase the potential audience size, as well as financial viability. One of the unique selling points of the Town Hall is the number and range of spaces within it – its size is what enables the building to encompass several different uses, both commercial and community-based.



The quantitative questionnaire data has been analysed to provide an overview of popularity of the different options. The chart above only includes the numerical questionnaire data, not the responses gathered through the workshop as we did not ask people at the workshops to rate their preferences.

1. Creative arts use

The most popular type of community use consultees would like to see was opportunities to use spaces in the Town Hall for the areas thriving creative arts scene.

Ideas contributed by participants during the consultation were wide-ranging, and included:

- Being able to use a variety of large and small spaces for performance: theatre, music, dance or as rehearsal and training spaces
- Exhibition spaces for visual arts
- Recording studios
- Arts workshops, classes, courses and training for the local and wider community
- Outreach programme to engage diverse audiences with the arts
- Residences for artists, performers and writers

Respondents felt there should be space for both local artists – of which there is a large and thriving community in Crouch End² – and for artists and performers of national and international stature to have the opportunity to perform in some of the fantastic spaces in the Hall. There could also be opportunities to use some of its heritage spaces for paintings, sculpture, video and installations.

The spaces which could enable this use are varied – from the Assembly Hall as a premier unique performance space to rival the best in London, to smaller rehearsal spaces (such as those currently fitted out and in use by Hornsey Dance). There was also interest in the potential use of the committee rooms as gallery space and smaller offices for training and workshops.

Participants at the workshops were clear about the need to balance commercial and community use to ensure that there is a viable and vibrant operation at HTH, so the suggestion was that there should be provision for subsidised bookings for local groups such as schools or creative organisations.

The current temporary licensee, Hornsey Town Hall Arts Centre (HTHAC), has demonstrated that there is a considerable appetite for creative uses within the Town Hall, through its temporary leasing of creative studio spaces, well-attended events, and activities since December 2014. The initiative has proved very popular with the local community and they have enabled Crouch End Open Studios to exhibit at the town hall for the first time in several years. In June, HTH will be home to many events of the increasingly high-profile Crouch End Festival.

Opportunities for some interesting creative activities could increase local quality of life, support and increase local arts provision, and draw people to the area, benefitting the local economy and giving Crouch End a cultural identity, alongside the Art House Cinema and a thriving local arts scene.

2. Community facility

Many people expressed a strong desire for the Town Hall to remain at the heart of the community. This means that local people should have the opportunity to use its spaces and facilities in the future at affordable rates.

Numerous community groups have expressed an interest in hiring spaces for meetings and activities. This will provide spaces for events, but also provide a regular income stream for the Town Hall.

² Local festivals and events, such as the Crouch End Festival or the Crouch End Open Studios, illustrate this thriving creativity in the area. Crouch End Open Studios presented the works of 30 local artists this year, the Crouch End Community Arts Festival, a community based project run by volunteers and funded by local businesses and people, is now the UK's biggest community arts festival with over 200 performers celebrating local cultural activity.



Strong feedback during the consultation was that the community access set out in the procurement process should reach all sections of the local community including children, young people, families, adults and older residents. It could also support national organisations bringing a wider range of activities to the area.

Some participants also suggested that the Town Hall could be used to house charities offering advice and signposting to other agencies, eg: to support vulnerable people in the borough.

In addition, community uses encompass provision of affordable space for local events, such as the Crouch End Festival and Crouch End Open Studios, as well as farmers' markets, and craft markets.

During the stakeholder and public workshop discussions, participants said that the benefits of ensuring community focused activities in the Town Hall are that it would allow people to stay locally for leisure activities, provide local community organisations with general support and affordable spaces for meetings and events and, more generally, enhance community cohesion. They also felt that this would help support the local economy in Crouch End's cafes, restaurants, bars and shops.

3. Educational opportunities

Across both workshop participants and survey respondents said there was a great interest in providing educational opportunities for adults, young people and children at the Town Hall. The variety of classes that could be offered is limitless (ideas mentioned included language classes, parenting classes, performing and visual arts classes). The need to provide this locally is backed up by the fact that several people commented on having to travel out of the borough or to central London to access these learning opportunities.

Suggestions made included informal programming by independent providers, eg: a lecture programme or public debates in the Council Chamber, or a more formal partnership arrangement with a university.

One educational concern raised was the lack of quiet study space in the area, with residents mentioning insufficient space at nearby Hornsey Library. This is a need that should be addressed by the Council.

4. Business space

While the use of spaces for start-up businesses, small and medium sized enterprises and studios for artists/designers/makers was the 4th most popular option in the online questionnaire, these uses were much more popular in the workshops.

HTH Arts Centre is currently renting out over 43 small studio and office spaces to 54 micro businesses in the non-historic parts of the Town Hall. Most of these are rented by local people, in need of affordable desk space near home. The spaces were rented within a matter of weeks and they report that they could have filled the space three times over, confirming the gap in the market for this type of space in Crouch End.

In discussions about these uses, participants described the benefits that this use would bring to the area as being the increase in local employment, networking and creative and entrepreneurial business collaboration, and day time buzz for the building.

In addition, providing business space could generate income to subsidise cheaper rates for local start-ups, and provision of small business facilitation advice would support the local community.

5. Event hire

While these uses emerged as a lower priority for residents, people were very clear in the workshop discussions that these uses were commercially lucrative and so should be pursued alongside community uses to subsidise the latter.

Participants felt that the Assembly Hall, in particular, could be hired out at high commercial rates for personal celebrations (eg: weddings) or corporate events, trade fairs, or rehearsal space for orchestras.

6. Café / restaurant

Although it was generally felt that Crouch End already has a lot of cafes and restaurants, many participants would like to see a café and/or restaurant in the Town Hall. It was felt that this would provide an added draw for the building and complement the many other uses that would be going on. This could be a commercial venture generating income for the building, or it could be operated with more of a community focus as a social enterprise offering training and employment for local unemployed people.

7. Heritage tours and interpretation

Respondents felt that architecture and heritage tours should be offered so that people can see and understand the building, its historic spaces and its role in civic development, which are of national and international significance. This could be enhanced by an interpretation area or a community museum which would tell the story of the Town Hall's 20th century genesis and its 21st century regeneration.

Participants did not consider the sole provision of managed access to see the historic spaces as being sufficient to deliver on the commitment to provide community use and access to the Town Hall.



8. Hotel/conference uses

Participants at the workshop discussion saw the value in the use of the town hall for conferences in order to generate income as part of the mix of uses. There was little appetite demonstrated for a hotel being the sole use in the building.

9. Other uses

Other uses that were mentioned in the workshops and in the 'other' category in the online survey were:

- Film location – this is a major source of income currently and could continue
- TV / radio station
- Sports facilities
- Spa / treatment rooms - sports offer could be complemented by physical treatment and therapy rooms, and/or a spa
- Bowling alley
- Nursery

Community ownership and management of Hornsey Town Hall

Participants expressed a desire at the workshops that the community should play a role in the governance of the town hall, and felt that a community-accountable body should be established that would oversee and monitor the mixed uses and heritage commitments within HTH, ensuring that the balance between commercial and community use that is agreed with the successful partner was upheld.

The community would expect that publicly accountable governance models will be considered by prospective developers.

Possible models were discussed during the workshops. These included:

1. The transfer of agreed elements of the Town Hall from the developer to a Community Interest Company set up for the purpose of managing the Town Hall for community benefit
2. Setting up a Community Board which has oversight and governance of the operation of the Town Hall to ensure that the Town Hall is operated in way which brings significant benefits to the community.

Use and management of Hornsey Town Hall Square

Throughout the consultation process it was generally agreed that the Town Hall Square should be the focal point and heart of Crouch End, welcoming and leading people into the Town Hall and being easily accessible from the street. Most participants did not want the square to change too much, and wanted to see the retention of the existing grass and trees, although some were more in favour of more radical redesign. However, it was generally felt that it should be up-graded to form an appropriate gateway to a regenerated Town Hall. Paramount for people was open public access to the Square at all times.

There was a great interest in keeping the square as open and as flexible as possible for it to be used for different kinds of events and activities. The sections below summarise the main uses that people would like to see in the Town Hall Square. These uses are not mutually exclusive and in their diversity would add to the vibrancy of the place and complement what happens inside the Town Hall. Furthermore, it was felt that the diverse uses of the square would not only attract different kinds of users, audiences and consumers, but would also diversify earned income streams.

1. Arts/ festival space

The most popular use amongst the workshop participants is to use the square for outdoor performances and events, such as music and theatre performances, open air cinema, public art installations and coffee/beer/food festivals with appropriate infrastructure. A semi-permanent canopy to cover the area for events in all weathers would allow a year-round use of the square.

2. Free seating space

There is a general consensus that the square should offer outside recreation space, free for anyone to use, with new seating available (in the form of benches or movable tables and chairs) for 'non purchase' dwelling and relaxation.

3. Markets/ fairs

Many people expressed the wish to use the square, or at least parts of it, for markets or small fairs, including a mixture of art, craft and food stalls. Renting out the space for markets and fairs could generate income.



4. Pop up catering

Although most participants did not want to see a permanent café or restaurant on the square as they felt that Crouch End already has enough of them, many suggested some form of pop-up catering on the square, such as a small kiosks, mobile café, ice-cream or food stalls or even portable al fresco dining. All these would have to be appropriate in design and scale.

5. Other uses that were mentioned included:

- Open air ice skating
- Community gardening

Management of the Square

While there was no consensus among the workshop participants as to whether the Square should be publically or privately owned and what the implications and challenges of either of these options would be, there was a strong consensus that the best and most efficient management option would be a combined management with the Town Hall building under a community-accountable governance model, to ensure that the Square is managed and used in the interest of the community.



APPENDIX 1

Online questionnaire

COMMUNITY USE AND ACCESS AT HORNSEY TOWN HALL

1. What is your aspiration for community use and access at Hornsey Town Hall?
Please tell us overall how you imagine being able to use and access the town hall in the future?
2. What sort of uses would you like to see in the Town Hall?
Please choose no more than 4 options. If you think we've missed any options that you'd like to see, please add them in the 'other' box.
 - Affordable meeting spaces for local groups
 - Start-up spaces for businesses
 - Performance spaces for drama, music, dance etc
 - Art gallery space(s)
 - Artist/designer/maker studios
 - Café / restaurant
 - Space / club for young people
 - Classes for adults
 - Classes for children and young people
 - Tours of historic spaces & interpretation area
 - Spaces to hire for ceremonies e.g. weddings, parties etc
 - Community run events, eg: festival
 - National / international events, eg: art shows
 - Markets and fairs, eg: vintage markets, trade fairs
 - Hotel and conference centre
 - Other:
3. Please help us understand why you selected this answer
4. Which of these uses can you imagine yourself / your family using?
5. Any other comments?
6. Tell us your name
7. What's your email address?
We'd like to stay in touch with you to keep you up to date with what's happening at the Town Hall. If you'd rather we didn't, don't leave your email address
8. Where do you live?
9. What's your phone number?



10. What's your twitter handle? You can follow us at @Hornsey_T_Hall

11. Do you live / work / shop in Crouch End?

Tick as many as appropriate:

- Live
- Work
- Shop
- Other:

Please note: the 16 options provided in the questionnaire were derived from the potential public uses that came out of the stakeholder workshops. People had the option to include additional suggestions in the 'other' choice.

Agenda for stakeholder and public workshops

On arrival, people to write their aspiration on a post-it and put it on wall:

What is your aspiration for community use and access at HTH?

Welcome and scene setting

Purpose of workshop and consultation

Discussion questions part 1:

- I. What uses would you like to see in HTH?
- II. What sort of space would this need?
- III. Benefits of this use?
- IV. Challenges of this use?

Discussion question part 2:

Town Hall Square – views on future use and management

Discussion question part 3:

Management options for community spaces in HTH

Round up of discussion and next steps