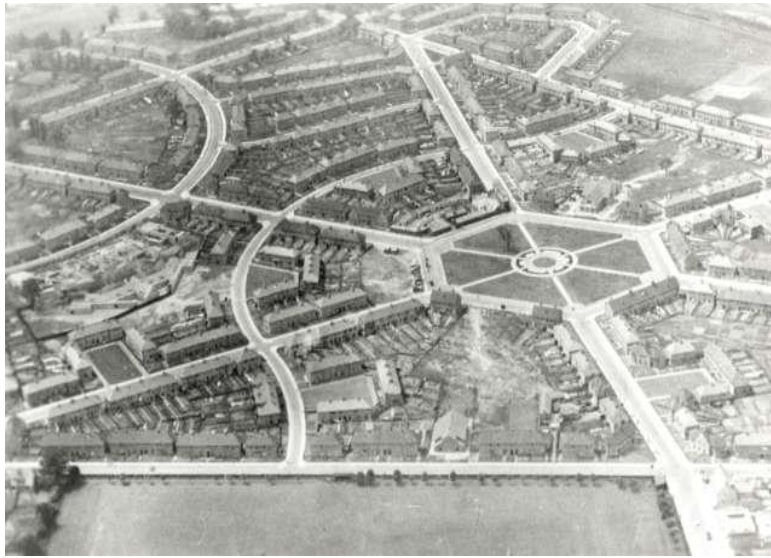




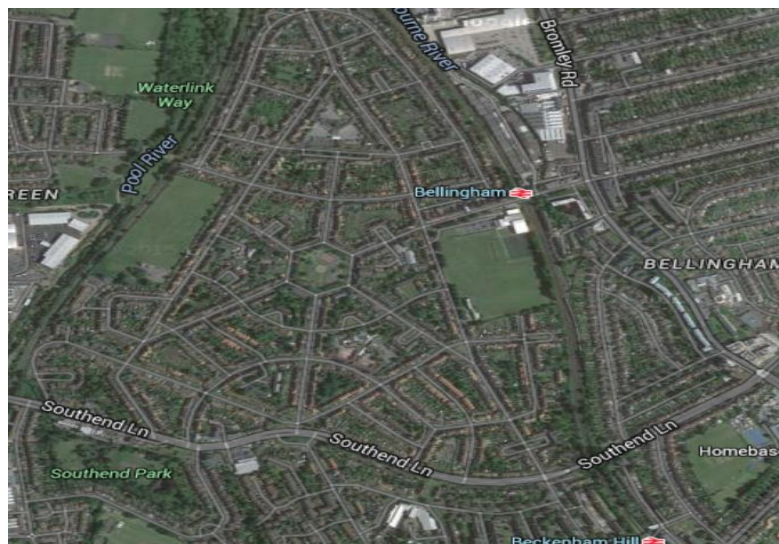
Feasibility study for Musical Streets Executive Summary

**Written by Clare Lovett
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Bellingham Estate, Lewisham, 1930s



Bellingham Estate, Lewisham, 2016



In spring 2016, Clare Lovett was commissioned by Sound Connections to explore the feasibility of Musical Streets; a large-scale multi-year project that aims to bring together disparate communities through shared family music-making. The consultancy looked to interrogate the proposition from Sound Connections, set the context and recommend next stages of development.

If you would like to read the full report, please contact Julia Roderick at Sound Connections at julia@sound-connections.org.uk.

Executive Summary

1. Sound Connections has been involved in helping to increase the quality of provision and status of Early Years in Challenging Circumstances for many years through strategic initiatives like the London Early Years Music Network (LEYMN). Sound Connections has a key role in stimulating debate and testing new models of practice which act as provocations to the music sector, arts funders and community engagement work.
2. Sound Connections recognises that within London's diverse and vibrant population, there are certain families who do not engage with their local community's cultural offer for a variety of reasons; cultural, economic, social and geographical. Sound Connections seeks to commission a project that explores how early years and family music making can make a difference, bring families together, and ultimately create a stronger and more resilient community.
3. The ambition behind developing this work is timely in the context of the current political, economic and policy debates. The government's 'austerity agenda' is prompting the sector to develop new ways of maximizing existing investment and exploring new types of partnerships and business models.
4. The arts sector continues to have difficulties in communicating and quantifying the benefits of quality arts provision to those who sit outside of the arts. A proposed multi-agency approach may broker an improved understanding within commissioning agencies and find new funding partners for this essential work.
5. It is an interesting time to be working with vulnerable families and communities. Despite many government policy initiatives, Barnardo's estimate that 3.7 million, UK-based children are living in poverty today¹. There remains a complex mix of need to be addressed for hard to reach families in London.
6. In order to assess the feasibility of the work, Sound Connections commissioned a research project in spring 2016 as part of its Youth Music Fund C work. This work was undertaken by research consultant Clare Lovett.
7. Sound Connections' proposal is to deliver a large-scale multi-year project that aims to bring together disparate communities through shared family music making. Groups might include any or all of the following: teenage parents; young children in foster care; Lesbian Gay Bi-Sexual Transgender (LGBT) parents; Special Educational Needs and Disabled (SEN/D) under-5s; Dads' groups; Refugee/English as Additional Language (EAL); mental health service users.

¹ Barnardo's, 2016:

https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/child_poverty/child_poverty_what_is_poverty/child_poverty_statistics_facts.htm

8. Actions were undertaken to shortlist the most effective geographical location for the project: meeting with invested cultural partners; reviewing council documents, website and research; going on site visits; and analysis of likelihood of traction through a range of information gathering.
9. **Lewisham** was selected as the pilot borough, with the **Bellingham Ward** as the most appropriate centre of the project.

10. Recommended aims for Musical Streets:

- Uniting and building resilient communities.
- Creating a new model of family engagement through a multi-agency approach.
- Exploring the benefits of siting a project in a non-formal community space.
- Creating progression routes beyond this to enable hard to reach families to walk into civic life through a music project

11. Recommended objectives for Musical Streets:

- Increased flow through to established music projects which support progression and development of skills.
- Increased skills and quality of childcare delivery taking place in informal spaces and groups.
- Broadening the diversity of workforce and genres of music.
- Increased skills and confidence of early years music leaders/early years workers and parent/carers.
- Connecting communities to music and cultural resources.
- Supporting regeneration and community cohesion.
- Improved wellbeing and life chances.

12. Indicators of success for Musical Streets:

- Established a Community of Practice.
- Increased numbers of families accessing provision.
- Tested one-to-one arts engagement model.
- Peer to peer mentoring and training.
- Improved access of local families to the redeveloped Fellowship Inn for music activities.
- Recruited new music leaders from non-western classical.
- Attendance at Sound Connections LEYMN conference.
- Delivery of music workshop at a community event.
- Family visits to cultural institutions beyond Bellingham Estate.

13. Recommended project stakeholders for Musical Streets, Year 1:

- Lewisham Music Hub
- Bellingham Community Project
- Lewisham Education Arts Network (LEAN)
- Phoenix Community Housing
- ABC PlayHut

- Bellingham Children's Centre
- The Rainbow Collective

14. Activity to include:

- **On the Ground:** regular workshops at the project hub, Creative Homes sessions - referrals by Housing Associations and working one-to-one in homes.
- Community Festival and similar gatherings.
- Visits beyond the community.
- **Training/CPD and networking for staff.**

15. There are numerous individual community groups and activities operating mostly on a voluntary basis in and around the estate. A particular characteristic is the range and activity of faith groups on the estate.

16. There are a number of academic and non-arts networks that may be able to support research and dissemination of findings to a wider audience. Initial research will require further work to narrow down the potential opportunities that each of these networks and partners may bring.

17. Initial desk research recommends phasing of three-year project as follows:

- **Year 1-** Bellingham Estate with LEAN/Lewisham Music Hub linked to Phoenix Housing Association, scoping of remaining two areas, and agreeing research/evaluation brief.
- **Year 2-** Bellingham + Bexley with Bexley Music Service and linked to Gallions housing association affiliated with Peabody Trust/sited within the Thamesmead housing development project/Housing Action Zone.
- **Year 3 -** Bellingham, Bexley +Triborough Music Service and linked to a local housing association, potentially Shepherds Bush Housing Association or Greenwich - as suggested by the Sound Connections team - which has the added benefit of keeping the project more tightly located in South East London and adjacent to the Thamesmead area.

18. Recommended next steps include:

- Discussion of internal plans and agreeing timeline for action, fundraising plans, management proposals; cross-checking with Sound Connections' existing business plan and priority development areas.
- Make contact with suggested partners (Bellingham Community Project, Lewisham Music Hub, LEAN, Phoenix, Well London, Bellingham Children's Centre, Rainbow Collective).
- Undertake a parent consultation.
- Undertake a Theory of Change exercise.
- Consider the top team of Early Years practitioners and artists.