

SEEN AND HEARD
A CHARTER WRITTEN BY YOUNG ADULTS,
FOR YOUNG ADULTS, TO DEVELOP
PUBLIC SPACES FOR THEIR GENERATION

VOLUME 2

CHARTER

Seen and Heard Volume 2 of 4: The Blueprint Collective Youth Charter

This document is complemented by a series of reports which cover various outputs of the project Seen and Heard. Volume 1 summarises the methodology and pedagogical approach behind the workshop sessions with members of the Blueprint Collective and Brent Youth Parliament. Volumes 2, 3, and 4 contain the outputs of those workshops; the Blueprint Collective Youth Charter, a set of policy recommendations, and a Design Guide respectively. Volume 4 is to be published separately.

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FOREWORD

In February 2018, the London Borough of Brent was awarded the title of London Borough of Culture for 2020. Brent's winning bid stood out because it unashamedly placed young people at its heart – promising an exploration of what culture means to them in the 21st century. Fast-forward two years and there are over 100 young people driving Brent's year of culture. This group of young people are known as Brent 2020's 'Blueprint Collective'. A self-described part-pressure group, part think tank who are invested in every aspect of Brent 2020.

Whilst developing the programme, a common theme that our young advisors talked about was how many public spaces are not built to accommodate young adults or their needs. They described how they were more likely to be treated as a security risk than as users or stakeholders. It is the Blueprint Collective, along with Brent Youth Parliament, who have authored the Seen and Heard project. Together, they have explored how young adults could be supported to have their voices heard in the development of public spaces in the future.

Seen and Heard is now a Charter, written by young adults, for young adults. It is a series of policy recommendations and practical guidance tools for local authorities and developers to adopt into their city planning. Wembley Park developer Quintain, and Principal Partner of Brent 2020, sponsored the project and offered the group a plot of land to put their recommendations into practice. We partnered with LSE Cities to help us deliver the programme and guide the young adults through the design, policy and research processes as part of their journey.

From here, Seen and Heard becomes a campaign led by young people and amplified over 2020. Please help us by joining the debate, sharing the charter and inviting the Blueprint Collective to tell you more about their work.

Lois Stonock
Artistic Director, Brent 2020

ESTABLISHING A CHARTER

The following report presents the charter, one of the outputs from the Seen and Heard workshops. The report consists of two parts. The first offers some more context to the aims and ambitions of the charter, including its final dissemination, and the second part is the charter itself. The charter has been authored by a group of young adults between the ages of 13 and 24 who live, work and study in the borough. They represent a range of ethnicities and social demographics. This project, and the compilation of this report, has been done by researchers at LSE Cities.

The process of establishing a charter was one of the main outputs of the Seen and Heard project. The hope was for the charter to not only authentically reflect the discussions and ideas that took place during the workshops, but to also effectively influence a wider audience that either resembled, or were in some sense proximate to, the workshops' participants.

The process began by teasing out a preliminary list of principles that would be central to the formulation of all the project's outputs. As this list became more specific, losing and gaining principles throughout the workshop sessions, the participants worked to formalise their principles by envisioning them in action. We asked: in the form of something public-facing (a document, a video, a poster etc.), what actions are these principles invoking? Together, the participants came up with a list of verbs that defined not only these actions, but also the subtle differences in intended audience for each action. From these verbs, we collectively expanded upon each 'demand' of the charter.



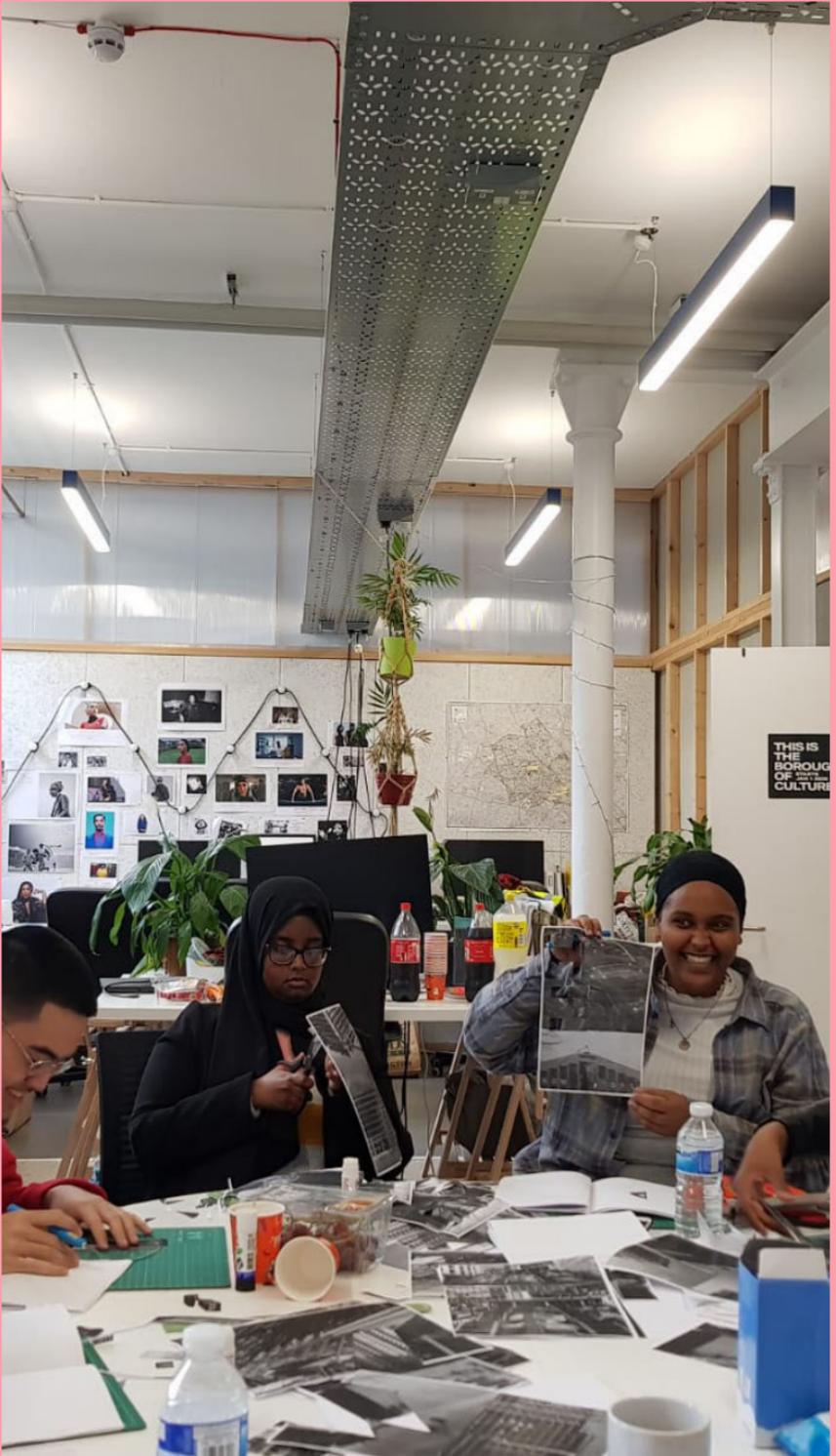
^Model making. Image: Catarina Heeckt

An important intermediate stage between the charter's conception and finalisation was its performance and retelling, by the participants, to external parties such as academics at the London School of Economics and practitioners from the Greater London Authority. In presenting the charter, we were able to establish a consensus with the Blueprint Collective over which terms of the charter's draft resonated with them and which terms felt more at odds.

Session 8, supported by Verity-Jane Keefe, helped us critically challenge assumptions we were making around the production of the charter. During this session, the participants also came up with an array of written and verbal responses to the now agreed upon list of verbs, presenting us with a critical vocabulary through which to synthesise a singular response for each.

The penultimate stage of the charter's production involved finding commonalities in the various written and verbal responses in order to produce a single, summative response to each of the verbs in the list. This involved collecting common terms and colloquialisms, key syntax, and noting the frequency of personal plural pronouns with certain verbs or nouns (for example, "We want", "We need", and "Our time") to then guide the reconfiguration of multiple quotes into one. Careful consideration was given to the tone of each combined quote in addition to the content.

Finally, in collaboration with Rose Nordin, a graphic designer and illustrator and part of the collaborative publishing practice OOMK, the Blueprint Collective worked to create a graphic language for the Charter in poster form. To do this they used forms from images of the Wembley Park development and drew on their own personal experiences and narratives.



^Designing the Charter.

SEEN AND HEARD YOUTH CHARTER

This charter is not guidance. This charter is not supplementary, nor is it made of recommendations. It is a list of demands; outlining the hopes, aspirations, and fears of a demographic that is so often misunderstood and ignored by decision-makers. This charter cannot speak for young people across the borough, or city, so instead it forces an opening through which those voices might be urgently heard and valued.

Though this charter speaks to power, its aim is to be spoken by others like us. Young people who might join our movements or start others like it. Young, disenfranchised people, who may not even realise their own disenchantment or how integral their participation could be to making a radical change.

This charter should transmit digitally but also physically and locally. Our neighbourhoods are resources through which we can make change and empower others, meaning our peers and parents are both witnesses and participants.

ESTABLISH!

Take us - and local young adults like us - into account when designing and managing public space.

“Recognise us and the name we’re making for ourselves! Look at us at eye-level and not in the way society thinks of us.”

CHALLENGE!

New resources and opportunities should be shared throughout the borough - not just in Wembley Park.

“The work shouldn’t stop here. Equally spreading resources, genuine attempts to share opportunities, that’s where the gain is. Beyond Wembley Park.”

INFORM!

Share knowledge of local opportunities (for work and also advocacy) with young people to empower them.

“There’s not enough information for young people on local jobs, career opportunities, and activities. We don’t know what we don’t know, so these spaces should also become ways of making it make sense!”

AFFIRM!

Making the case for spaces that are for and by us.

“These spaces should boldly say that they belong to us and not for big organisations to claim! Let us run the programmes.”

COLLECTIVISE!

We want to encourage more young people to be the change they want to see.

“We need to stand together, to take up space, in order to make a change! It’s time to come together in spaces, organisations, and movements where other young people can also pull up and come through.”

“We are taking up space! This is our time to stand up together and take control to implement this change.”

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