



Latin Elephant's Response to Seven Sisters CPO / Wards Corner Regeneration Project

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**On behalf of West Green Rd and Seven Sisters Development Trust;
Pueblito Paisa Ltd and Latin Corner UK, Ltd**

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About Latin Elephant

Latin Elephant is a charity that promotes participation, engagement and inclusion of Migrant and Ethnic groups in processes of urban change in London. We promote alternative and innovative ways of engaging with migrant and ethnic groups in regeneration initiatives in London and in particular with Latin Americans.

Latin Elephant is currently working to support retention and growth of existing small migrant and ethnic businesses in Elephant and Castle, taking into account conditions for relocation, affordability and future sustainability. We are supporting affected parties in Wards Corner site through our wider policy initiative by responding to various local consultations and this CPO.

Ground for opposition to CPO

Latin American business clusters at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters, the largest in London and the UK, are at risk of displacement due to regeneration. The report [*The Case for London's Latin Quarter: Retention, Growth, Sustainability*](#) (Roman-Velazquez & Hill, 2016), published by Latin Elephant, sets the conditions for greater recognition of Migrant and Ethnic Economies (MEEs) under contexts of regeneration and proposes 10 recommendations to stimulate retention, growth and sustainability of MEEs all of which will contribute to mitigate risk of existing economies and the communities in which these are anchored.

We oppose the CPO issued to traders in the Wards Corner development site and demand accountability of the measures taken and the mechanisms that are in place to mitigate the impact of regeneration programmes on these migrant and ethnic businesses (MEBs), their supply chains and the communities which they serve and of which they are part of.



The following recommendations, extracted from our report, are applicable to the current situation and will go some way to support retention, growth and sustainability of MEBs:

- Develop overarching retail strategies for development areas which draw upon the needs of existing communities and local economies and are inclusive to both small and micro businesses and MEB clusters.
- Set guidelines to guarantee and monitor the quantity and quality of affordable business commercial units (rent space) for small and micro businesses in new and refurbished developments.
- Create conditions which will enable existing business clusters to better manage urban change at every stage of the development process. This should include support strategies for transition phases whether this is relocation, compensation or a prioritised return.
- Support the retention, sustainability and growth of existing businesses through a comprehensive business readiness programme to include: language support, business development, financial planning, employment law advice, other training and access to financing options for MEBs.
- Support local job and skills creation by sourcing local talent and skills to design and build locally and improve access to training, education and employment, especially for migrant entrepreneurs.
- Invest in infrastructure that respects community needs and supports the needs of micro business, for example flexible business units where complimentary activities can take place or public realm improvements to maximise footfall.

Based on these recommendations it is our position that the measures and mechanisms to mitigate impact of regeneration for existing MEBs in the site are not enough to warrant a CPO. The CPO will result in displacement of MEBs in Seven Sisters and of the communities they support. The impact of such displacement for the communities that depend on affordable food and the support mechanisms provided by these businesses have not been fully explored.

Measures and mechanisms to support businesses and mitigate associated risks:

Regeneration schemes in London are taking place in deprived boroughs where there is a high proportion of diverse ethnic populations. Thus minority groups and MEBs are disproportionately affected by regenerations schemes in London. MEB clusters often contribute to community cohesion and are underpinning of diverse communities in inner city areas, providing a valuable social as well as economic function.

Throughout the process of urban change, MEBs instead often operate under conditions of great uncertainty, disengaged from planning processes and under-represented from retail strategies in regenerated areas. Although the causal factors behind this are varied, it is clear



that strong policy frameworks alongside the provision of tailored business engagement and support service for MEBs together could go some way to help build in resilience of MEBs to withstand some of the risks associated with rapid urban change.

The Equalities Impact Assessment does not consider the need of specialist services to strengthen the position of traders when relocating and seeking return to new premises. This is important because without the right mechanisms in place and good business practice models MEBs are likely to be disadvantaged when relocating to temporary locations and whether opting to return to the new market. This is not about the cost of relocation, but about been on an equal level playing field to other businesses who have more readily available access to finance and business advice services.

Equally important, under the current S106 stipulations, licence holders will not be entitled to compensation, but instead a financial assistance fund has been set aside to assist with relocation costs. However, in cases where relocation is not possible, the loss of jobs and, in the case of family run businesses, the only source of income and subsistence for entire families here and in the country of origin is not accounted for; nor is the impact on the supply chains upon which these businesses rely upon for the importation of goods.

Affordable business units:

The Equalities impact assessment makes no attempt to consider the extent to which engagement and participation of MEBs will be sought in consultations for new retail strategies in the area, nor in any negotiations and or forums on affordable business provision.

There is also no indication as to how the provision of 30% reduction of market value rent for the first 18 months with full market value rent thereafter was reached. Different provisions exist in Boroughs across London, with Southwark requiring a 40% reduction on the market value for a period of five years whilst in the Olympic site the period of affordable rent set by the London Development Corporation is indefinite. This could potentially hamper existing MEBs ability to remain sustainable after a prolonged period of instability provoked by relocation and return to the new market. The consequences of such transitional conditions and the subsequent impact for traders and the communities in which these are anchored have not been considered in the Equality Impact Assessment.

Economic and cultural value:

The presence of migrant entrepreneurs widely benefits the surrounding area by increasing economic and cultural diversity, reducing unemployment and social exclusion, mitigating the problematic employment situation of young people and raising living standards for ethnic groups that can often suffer from greater disadvantage than other segments of



society. Despite this, MEBs are often disregarded in processes of urban regeneration and often miss out of opportunities to bid for new spaces due to lack of access to finance, knowledge of the system or poor business practices.

The Equalities Impact Assessment does not account for loss of jobs, businesses, community services, valued heritage assets and ethnic and cultural diversity. The role of MEBs in community cohesion and the area's economic contribution has not been fully assessed.

MEBs are also meeting places and spaces of social networking. MEBs are part of the identity of Seven Sisters and it is a destination for many migrant and ethnic groups in the capital who travel from far afield to buy specialist products at low cost, send remittances and socialise.

The ground floor of the Wards Corner building has been listed by Haringey Council as an Asset of Community Value, yet the CPO does not take this into account when considering duty of care and the public benefit case. Neither does the report mention the many and varied business and community organisations that continue to value and support Wards Corner and Seven Sisters market, including WCC, the market traders' organisation El Pueblito Paisa Ltd, the West Green Road/Seven Sisters Development Trust, Tottenham Traders Partnership, the Federation of Small Businesses, Residents' Associations, Latin Corner UK, Ltd and Latin Elephant. The public benefit case set out to justify CPO is not valid because it does not take into account the value of the site currently, thus invalidating the implementation of the CPO.

Community Plan

The Community Plan is dismissed as not viable. What has the Council, TfL and other interested stakeholders done to support the community plan? It is our position and that of the traders that the Council has a public duty to do so, but that little has been done to fully contemplate support for the Community Plan option.

Retailers are not convinced that enough has been done to improve race relations after the riots in the borough. Clearly designating a preference for Grainger's planning application over the Community Plan and issuing a CPO to force traders out of Wards Corner building is contributing to community tensions, anxiety and a sense of disregard of local groups and communities who have for more than a decade tried to engage and provide an alternative to the developer's plan which they conceive as a threat to local groups and the community's sense of belongingness and wellbeing.



Background and statement of support for Pueblito Paisa (Extract from article)

By Dr. Patria Roman-Velazquez

Pueblito Paisa in Seven Sisters Market, is home to the second largest concentration of Latin American businesses in London, and as its name suggests the retailers are mostly Colombian, but there are also retailers from Peru and Cuba. Wards Corner – the building that houses *Pueblito Paisa* - is also home to retailers of African, Afro-Caribbean and Indian descent. Currently all of the market units are occupied by traders who have identified as having a migrant and or ethnic background and 60% of the floor space is occupied by traders who identified themselves as Latin Americans. *Pueblito Paisa's* contribution to the local economy is supported by wider community networks and strong community engagement.

The legal battle to save Wards Corner can be traced back to 2003, when Haringey Council announced their plans to redevelop Wards Corner and chose private developer Grainger to fulfil such plans. This was part of the Labour Government's (under Tony Blair) New Deals for Communities initiative that instilled to regenerate some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Not much seemed to happen initially, until August 2007 when plans for the area were presented to the public for the first time and a development agreement was reached between Haringey Council and Grainger (the developer).

The proposal included the demolition of Ward's Corner to pave the way to new retail space, a leisure centre and new homes. The scheme was opposed by a number of local organisations, including Latin American retailers, the main occupiers of the building. These organisations joined forces and formed Ward's Corner Coalition (WCC), 'a grassroots organisation working to stop the demolition of the homes, businesses and indoor market above Seven Sisters tube station and fighting the attempts of Grainger PLC to force out the local community'. The WCC was formed at the end of 2007 and since then has been involved in a long and costly legal battle challenging planning applications submitted by the developers.

The identity of *Pueblito Paisa* is very much defined by this lengthy legal battle to remain in the space and continue being part of the communities in which it is engrained. The campaign to save *Pueblito Paisa* is significant because retailers reinforced a strong sense of self definition and heightened their determination to claim their rights to stay in place.

The sense of belongingness and the rights to the place have been challenged by the threats to vacate the building at various stages throughout the planning process. This became evident straight away when retailers received their first eviction notices. As Vicky Alvarez, the leader of Latin American retailers at *Pueblito Paisa* narrated 'if they thought that they



could easily get rid of us they had a great surprise in hand, we were not going to be easily disposed off' ... 'we are here to stay' (in interview with Roman-Velazquez).

The campaign to save Wards Corner gained momentum in 2008, when Boris Johnson the mayor of London made the following public statement to Haringey Council: "The proposed re-development of Ward's Corner would pull down the market and only offer space to a handful of people, which is unacceptable. I want the Council to urgently review this proposal and put the livelihood of the traders and the thousands of locals who rely on this market at the core of their decision." (http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=17959/ Accessed 10 June 2009)

It again made headline news in July 2010 by setting precedence for planning regulations on the grounds of race relations. In what was regarded as a landmark case WCC won the appeal to Grainger's planning application. A High Court Judgement declared the planning process by the council unlawful because it did not follow Equalities legislation. The decision was based on the failure of the council to assess the impact of the proposed development on equality of opportunity and relations between different racial groups in the area. Despite this victory, the campaign to save Ward's Corner continued as the developers submitted a second application that was approved by Haringey Council in May 2012 and to which WCC also appealed against the Council's decision. When everything seemed lost, WCC joined forces with academic institutions, alternative architects and planning groups to develop a community led plan for the Wards Corner building previously known as Wards Department store. In April 2014 Haringey Council finally granted Wards Corner planning permission to restore the building, however as they expressed:

The granting of planning permission for the Wards Corner community plan is an important step forwards. We now have a better position from which to approach TfL [Transport for London], and potential backers in our mission to make the plan a reality. ... However, Grainger PLC still have planning permission for their plan and the threat of displacement and demolition still remains. Haringey Council have an agreement with Grainger PLC to use compulsory purchase orders to force local businesses and homes out of Wards Corner. We need to continue to work alongside the people directly affected by the Grainger plan to campaign against the injustices they face and to encourage Grainger, the Council and TfL to work with the local community in creating a plan for Wards Corner that meets the needs of local people (WCC, <https://wardscornercommunityplan.wordpress.com/> Accessed 2 July 2014).

The claims to remain in place is embraced not just by Latin American retailers, but by local community organisation alike. This is not just a battle to save Pueblito Paisa, but a local heritage cultural site in Seven Sisters that is supported by wider community networks.



Signatories supporting and endorsing this response with interest in the Land as businesses, organisations and consumers:

NAME	Business Name & Address
Mirca Morera	Latin Corner UK, Ltd (Seven Sisters Market, U 56)
Carlos Burgos	West Green Road / Seven Sisters Development Trust
Vicky Alvarez	El Cafetal & West Green Rd / Seven Sisters Dev Trust
Cllr Natalia Perez	Councillor for Hammersmith & Fulham
Cesar F. Yunda Palaquibay	Licensee, Seven Sisters Market U56
Marta Hinestroza	Seven Sisters Market U49
Fabian Catano	Seven Sisters Market U53
Fenya Fishchler	North London Food Not Bombs (N15 4JU)
Illary Valenzuela	Sin Fronteras
Aleksandra Stankova	North London Food Not Bombs