



**Ethnic Minorities  
& Youth Support  
Team Wales**

**Tîm Cymorth  
Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig  
& Ieuenctid Cymru**

## **All Wales BAME Engagement Programme**

### **All Wales ZOOM Forum – 27 October 2021**

#### **Topic: History, Heritage & Housing: The Gentrification of Cardiff**

Minutes of the Meeting:

#### **Attendees:**

24 attendees in total, 4 of whom were the members of the All Wales BAME Engagement Team. The forum was opened up and attendees were invited to share introductions, either verbally or in the chat function.

**Mymuna Soleman**, Privilege Café; **Ross Thomas**, Tai Pawb; **Lyn Eynon**, Cardiff Civic Society; **Assia Kayoueche**, ESYT; **Kiran Aulakh**; **Raj Aulakh**; **Paul Wishart**, Oak Foundation; **Becca Wilks**, journalist; **Edward Lee**; **Sibani Roy**; **Rebecca Falvey**, RSPB; **Ginger Wiegand**, EHRC; **Chriss O'Connell**, Gov.Wales; **Ken Barker**; **Sara Robinson**; **Nerida Bradley**, facilitator and theatre director; **Amelia John**, Welsh Gov; **Hugh Russell**, Wales Co-op Centre; **Cadi Cliff**, Wales Co-op Centre); **Tara Aisha**

Key Speakers: Lyn Eynon and Ross Thomas.

#### **Discussion on Gentrification of Cardiff**

##### **EYST Presentation**

Focused on 4 areas of Cardiff:

- Butetown
  - Butetown History and Arts Centre
  - Paddle Steamer Cafe
- Grangetown
  - Avana Bakeries
  - Tramshed
- City Centre
  - Brains Brewery
  - Castle Emporium
- City Road
  - Poet's Corner
  - Gaiety Grand Cinema



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### Lyn Eynon

- Discussing Britannia Park, council policy and how planning policy affects communities.
- I will talk about how regeneration and the planning process promote gentrification in the Butetown ward, Butetown has seen more redevelopment than anywhere else in Wales, with very little of the old docklands now remaining.
- We are into a third wave of 'regeneration' in Butetown. In the 1960s, the old Tiger Bay was demolished and replaced. From the late 1980s, Cardiff Bay Development Corporation replaced old docklands with new waterfront, and built the Barrage. Now billions of pounds are being invested along the south of the mainline railway (including Capital Quarter and Capital Quay), along Dumballs Road, in Atlantic Wharf, and eventually east of Roath Dock. Politicians like to present regeneration in Cardiff Bay as the solution to poverty in the city's 'southern arc'.
- Local people struggle to access new jobs, particularly those with good career prospects and building a gated community at Century Wharf did not improve living conditions on the nearby council estate. Clearing the docklands destroyed most of its architectural heritage.
- The population of the Butetown ward has grown rapidly, and continues to do so, with thousands more new homes already proposed for the coming decade. Most new housing since the 1980s has been privately built and is too expensive for local people, whose children often have to move away to find homes.
- 2002, Welsh Government acknowledged the need to tackle racial inequality in housing, but recent research for its new Race Equality Action Plan shows that little has yet changed, despite a requirement on local authorities to have a strategy for this.
- Cardiff's Local Development Plan requires residential planning applications to include affordable units, but developers get away with claiming that would make their project unviable. The contributions to homes and social infrastructure requested under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act are rejected, but Council lets the developer go ahead anyway.
- None of the over 600 new flats now being built on Dumballs Road qualifies as affordable. Much of the housing development in Cardiff Bay has been poor quality, even when marketed as luxury.
- For many new residents, regeneration has not been a success, with rising rents and house prices, even accommodation classified as 'affordable' on official criteria is beyond reach for many.
- Homelessness has become far more visible on our streets but is often hidden out of view.
- The private sector has never filled the gap left by the collapse in council building from the 1980s.
- Housing associations have made some contribution but have sometimes lost their local roots and become unaccountable to their tenants. Council ownership protects the Butetown



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estate against the worst abuses of the private rented sector, even though Council has yet to fund new cladding for Loudoun House and Nelson House.

- Welsh Government's abolition of Right to Buy has opened the way to building council homes in Cardiff to reduce the long waiting list.
- Council has several projects planned for Butetown, including some much needed larger homes on James Street. But none have yet started and more will be required.
- Gentrification is also about local businesses, The Sustainable Studio on Curran Road, which provides genuinely affordable space for independent creatives, is one of many businesses on borrowed time until that area is razed for The Embankment masterplan of 2,500 new homes.
- The Emporium on Womanby Street, which housed small independent retailers, is the latest to receive a notice to quit from its landlord.
- Council is promoting a 15,000 capacity Arena in Atlantic Wharf, saying it will provide jobs, but most will be casual work at near the minimum wage.
- Local live music once thrived in Cardiff's docklands but has now all but vanished here.
- The cultural sector is of growing economic importance, but it must also reflect the diversity of our city and enhance community life.
- The Museum of Military Medicine will ruin Britannia Park and its content, closely tied to the history of the British Empire, is unwelcome to many. Most artefacts of the Butetown History and Arts Centre are now in boxes at the Glamorgan Archives.
- Travel and Transport Urban growth often brings congestion, adding to pressure on local communities.
- Public transport is inadequate for the population, workforce and visitors. Across the city, many buses stop in the early evening.
- Among the few valued buildings left after the waterfront redevelopment are Cory's Building and Merchant Place at the southern end of Bute Street. Early this year, Cardiff Council bought both buildings and advertised them for sale. Its preferred buyer is Duke's Education, who wish to move their elite private Cardiff Sixth Form College from its rented accommodation on Newport Road.
- The fees this College charges are eye-watering: £19,000 a year just for tuition, up to £51,000 with boarding. It claims to offer places as scholarships to children in and around Cardiff, but few if any come from the city's deprived areas
- For several years, local parents have complained that Council catchment rules mean they cannot get their children into the school of their choice. Butetown's youth are scattered round the city, while wealthy offspring will be welcomed here. Cardiff and Vale College, concentrating on vocational training in its new building on Dumballs Road, should be an asset to the community, although it does not always feel like that.
- The new 3G all-weather pitch on Canal Park should serve both College and local teams, but some worry if it will, and regret the loss of the old grass pitch.



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- More engagement between the College and the community would benefit both. Council and Citizens.
- A consistent theme in docklands regeneration over more than 60 years has been the exclusion of local people from any real say in what happens.
- Atlantic Wharf residents feel ignored when they ask questions about an Arena on their doorstep. Green spaces are seen as development opportunities rather than local assets.
- Many local people wanted to keep the Paddle Steamer café but some preferred to replace it with council homes. Women, disabled people, young people and many others have requirements that Council Officers may ignore.
- I am looking at the possibility of including a café within the proposed Council housing development on Bute Street, which would be possible, but I am not optimistic that Council will want to do that.
- Gentrification excludes residents from decisions affecting their lives. The planning system seeks to marginalise people, but community voices must be heard.
- Cardiff's plan is currently being renewed and will define how the city develops over the next 15 years, where homes and offices will be built, and how planning will support the One Planet target of a carbon neutral city.
- Consultation must be open to diverse voices across our city.

#### **Participant who wrote an article referenced in presentation**

- Story was written as author completed her Masters.
- Discussed the intention behind the mural; the wall was specifically selected for its proximity to Cardiff Bay Police Station. With the events of this year the mural was a way to remind residents of Cardiff Bay that Cardiff is still their city and they make up the fabric of the city just as much as anyone else.

#### **EYST**

- Thinking point for while Ross Thomas speaks, the findings from today will be shared with Welsh Government and Council. Asks for people to consider who else we could share the findings with.

#### **Lyn Eynon**

- Consultations next month regarding next phase of Cardiff's Local Development Plan.
- Discussion on strategic sites to develop over next 15 years.
- Set of forums Council have said they'll organise, some of which will be for young people. Encourage people, if you can, to get involved and their voices are heard.
- Too often on planning and development issues young people whose futures are affected aren't able to get their voices and points across, especially young ethnic people.

#### **Ross Thomas, Tai Pawb**



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- Conversations today are a crucial starting point in the large debate on what the public want to see for the future of Cardiff as the capital.
- Qualifies that he's a young white man living in the South Wales Valleys, but he is familiar with Cardiff, knows the area well, and borne out of the same sense of belonging that others on the call have within the areas of which they live.
- Gentrification may not be a thing in Bridgend County, but understands lack of investment and opportunity.
- Over last 20-30 years employment, health inequalities and the ward he lives next to is most deprived in Wales, Caerau in Bridgend County, can empathise with what's happening in Cardiff.
- Clear that Cardiff is changing and has been for decades;
  - In Grangetown, for example, behind 1995-2015 house prices have risen by 334%. Average house price is £200,000.
  - In Butetown in 1995 average home was c£65,000. Nowadays is more like £180-190,000. Wages have not tripled in this time.
  - Average rent in Cardiff is £128 per week and city is experiencing some of the largest year on year rises in the whole of UK.
  - Certain areas in the city are subject to exponential rent increases, including Butetown and Grangetown.
- Lee Waters, MS for Llanelli and Deputy Minister in Welsh Government who sparked something of a debate in the Senedd years ago about where we find ourselves today when he hashtagged Gentrification in response to a vegan café opening in Grangetown.
  - Considered controversial in some sectors but did shine a much need spotlight on the changing face of Grangetown and other parts of Cardiff, such as Butetown and Cardiff Bay.
- It cannot be that people are left behind; investments and transformation can be great and beneficial, as long as that transformation and investment are shaped by the local community.
- What are our solutions?
  - We need to have that wider conversation and ask that fundamental question: what is community? What do people believe their local community to be?
  - The people who contributed to and shaped Grangetown and Butetown are anchors in their own right, and sometimes people say there is no such thing as community, such as David Cameron who referred to 'Big Society' as he does not believe society exists anymore. Granted there are hurdles communities face that test their mettle but these are proud communities.
  - This is not unique to Cardiff, Gentrification affects other areas such as coastal communities in North and West Wales as well as South East including:



Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Newport as an effect of the scrapping of Severn Bridge tolls and the impact of the pandemic where you can work remotely.

- Not long ago, Butetown held the title for worst child poverty rate in Cardiff and large pockets of deprivation and disadvantage in Grangetown too. Unemployment is high, wages are lower than average and lack of access to private vehicles is higher than average.
- Significant health inequalities and discrimination based on protected characteristics are often an issue. This tells us that we are not levelling up, why are we not using proximity to the city centre to create better employment opportunities.
- Are existing employment opportunities directed at local people? Look at the investment around the Bay over the past decade or two, is it that benefitting local people?
- Buildings and landmarks may be important, but the best asset is people. Law of consequences here where things are done to and for a community, and not with.
- Further fundamental question to add regarding engagement in consultations with local planning and development processes.
  - Is it transparent?
  - Is it easy to engage with?
  - Do local people have their say? Are their voices being listened to?
  - Are the local authorities and other partners involved in redevelopment and transformation properly reaching out and listening to the views of local people?
  - Does the system need simplifying? Ross thinks yes.
- Communities are made or broken on people, so let's make ensure that local people are at the heart for any continued reshaping or redeveloping of our communities and that they are net beneficiaries of any changes made.
- Common phrase used when he worked in Community First programme was 'hard to reach' communities or people. These do not exist. It's about implementing processes and communication methods so that people feel that they can trust the process.
- No such thing as 'hard to reach', it's about developers, local authority, and others reaching out and listening to communities.
- 'Hard to reach' is a thing of the past, and shouldn't have even been a thing at all, it's about using different methods of communication so that people feel that they can trust the process that they're being involved with.

### **EYST**

- Is also from outside of Cardiff, from RCT and sees that there is little investment put into these communities.
- More commuters are moving out of the city due to living costs and settling on main train lines rather than paying for private vehicles.



- In the Valleys especially, people are ‘flipping’ houses in the Valleys which is great when it comes to producing quality housing, but it also contributes to price hikes and this will push out local families and community.
- Regarding private vehicles, this was meant to be in the original presentation but couldn’t fit it in, the movement of people from Butetown to St Mellons. This rehousing is removing people from a central location to the outskirts of the city.
- Affects people from low income backgrounds who depend on amenities such as public transport, nextbike, and being in walking distance to the city.
- The rehousing also tends to put people in non diverse areas to diversify the areas, a move which is dangerous in of itself as it puts lone people, family or families in a place where they know no one and may not be welcomed in the new area.
- New mosque is being built in St Mellons but no schools, where will the children attend?
- Paintbrush effect over Butetown over who the residents are and what the areas stand for. No one takes the time to properly consult or listen to the local community.
- As mentioned in the chat, ‘hard to reach’ is offensive. People are here and want developers to talk to them.
- A good question in the chat regarding how putting consultations online isn’t enough.
- Consultation online isn’t engagement, it’s access but short of going into the communities and physically explaining the proposed changes and getting feedback.
- With Race Equality Action Plan the Government delegated to people to go into communities and get feedback.
  - Sikh woman attended Splott Gurudwara to get feedback but what transpired was a room of men.
  - Only 1 female attendee.
  - Engagement only came from traditional, middle aged men.
- Chat is correct that there is no real engagement, not even proper translations. Sometimes there is an option for Google Translate but this is not always correct translation as it is very literal.
- We need to challenge the Council as everyone who pays council tax is paying the Council and Government and should be listened to. All Cardiff residents have the right to voice their concerns about the city.
- Individuals’ views are important as individual action can go far.

### **EYST**

- Open the forum for questions
- Open question from Ross Thomas in the chat bar: do people who have engaged in planning systems feel that they reflect their views? If you haven’t, do you have confidence in it?
- Has anyone engaged in this process?

### **Lyn Eynon**



- Not an easy process to engage with, typically on a big development you get large documents, such as the thousands of pages in documents regarding the marina development.
- There is also normally little time to respond to these developments.
- Very often people expect too much from the planning system; a lot of the most controversial decisions in Cardiff do not flow back to private developers on private land but rather public bodies such as the Council, the Government, or local Health Boards.
- Health Board is responsible for the proposed development on the Northern Meadows, a site where people are currently occupying in protest to stop the development.
- A lot of these decisions are very political, Paddle Steamer is an obvious example. Really a lot of the developments in Butetown are public body led.

#### EYST

- Question from chat: do people know how to engage? Do they feel confident enough to engage? You can't be what you can't see.
- We need more representation in central positions, especially with regards to planning and development.
  - Can take this point forward because do people know how to engage? Communities need champions to take forward their views.
- Resources and expertise are needed to engage in the planning processes.
- When these processes are so detailed it can intimidate individuals into not participating.

#### EYST

- Chat question: who is the city designed for?
- Where do people feel they belong in Cardiff? Gives personal experience of being comfortable in all the city but would only live in areas such as Butetown, Grangetown, Splott and Adamsdown due to a sense of community and belonging in these areas.
- Feels that the areas wouldn't welcome her, even if she had the money to rent there. Doesn't want the extra stress of being regarded as suspicious and as an outsider.
- Asks participants to consider that while taking Adam's question: where would you want to live in Cardiff? Where do you feel comfortable?

#### EYST

- People don't take part in consultations as they feel like lip service, more like tick box exercises instead of real engagement.
- What mechanisms could we have where the community is generally consulted about proposed developments? How do we achieve this?
- Simple processes needed that lay people can understand then start placing pressure on decision making.



- Lyn Eynon made an interesting point about how people tend to blame private developers for bad development in Cardiff, when in reality a lot of these decisions trace back to Cardiff Council.

#### EYST

- Chat comment: that diversity within planning and development is difficult, for example in Butetown not many of the Somalis or Yemenis have degrees in planning.
- Gaps in equal education leads to people not being able to get degrees, thus not able to get certain jobs.
- Movement of children to lower EYSTN schools ensure there is a gap in education where children of colour receive lower standards of schooling, which affects their future.
- Mentioned in the chat by participant that her sister, despite being educated, struggles to understand and navigate the planning process herself.
- Gentrification is a large topic and the processes are tedious and archaic. Within our communities we must band together, educate each other, and then put forward our views with the planning and development processes.

#### Lyn Eynon

- How do we get involved in the planning process? Very important.
- In terms of shaping Cardiff to how the residents want it to look we must take initiative; part of the problem is that all the initiatives taken by the Council and developers out public in a position where we must respond to that.
  - Public need to take initiatives to look at empty land and think what we do want there? What could we put there to benefit the local residents?
- We should put forward proposals to the Council of 'this is what the community wants', rather than waiting for them to release a consultation on what they think is suitable usage for the land.
- It's important to look at decisions made behind 'closed doors'; a few months ago, found out that once a month senior Councillors and officers meet to decide what directions various things will take in the city. All are middle aged white men, not an inclusive process. We need to break these down and if needed set up own forums, such as People's Assemblies and Citizens Assemblies which are more open, can come up with ideas and campaign for those.

#### EYST

- Question from chat: do you think if the Council's employees were more representative of the city's population this would help?
- Definitely, platforms in all areas of life are needed but we need to get those people in positions.

#### EYST



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- Next forum's aim is to get Councillors in, particularly:
  - Cllr Joel Williams, Pontprenau
  - Cllr Abdul Sattar, Grangetown
  - Cllr Saeed Ebrahim, Butetown
- Feedback will help with setting up next forum and may shape future initiatives.
- RE: chat question, yes and no. Representation is important but must be correct and fair, we don't want to be in a position where we have more Priti Patels, Sajid Javids or Rishi Sunaks.
- We need people who represent the community but also have a deep love and passion for the community. People have different views, which makes us human, but we need representatives who love their community.
- Must be careful about who stand for election, who get elected, and how we get involved. We must make sure they have a long term focus to protect all communities within Cardiff, not just a particular group or groups.

#### **EYST**

- Comment from chat: we should not have to choose between affordable housing and community spaces.
- Problem all over Cardiff.
- Thanks attendees, speakers and participants.