**Louise Bowles, Sustainability Lead at HawkinsBrown:**

The area has been fundamentally changed for the better over what is quite a short period of time really.

**Duncan Price, Sustainability/Climate Global Lead, Buro Happold:**

The green space of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the great transport connectivity, the mix of uses, the investment in the public realm and the quality of the buildings, have all been really well received.

**Liz Peace CBE, Chair, Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation:**

I think we have created a genuine destination, that people want to go to.

**James Halsall, Senior Design Manager · London Legacy Development Corporation:**

It's an amazing legacy.

**Narrator:** Chobham Manor was the first of five new neighborhoods built in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the home of the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics. Residents first moved into the 880 properties close to the Velodrome in 2016. 75% are family homes, three bedrooms or more. Ahead of another thousand now set to be built in Pudding Mill Lane on the far south side of the park. The London Legacy Development Corporation that manages Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, carried out a Post Occupancy Evaluation, or POE report, basically to find out what life is like for people living there.

In this podcast, we find out how it could be used to help other Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park developments and also across London, and the rest of the UK.

**Member of the public:** I'm amazed at how many kids I just see randomly run out of a front door and run to the rain garden without parents around. I'm quite glad that they feel safe enough to do it.

**Member of the public:** There isn't another area of London that feels like this. The feeling is more like a provincial town, within London.

**Member of the public:** It's really accessible for me to get to go everywhere because I need to use a wheelchair. So I really like the area.

**James Halsall:** I'm James Halsall, I'm a senior design manager at the LLDC and I'm an architect by background, with a keen interest in both sustainability and housing.

Chobham Manor is the first Olympic neighborhood, and it's really interesting to go back and look at the first phase of the first neighborhood, what's worked well, what could be improved on for next time? And that's partly by asking people what they think, and it's partly by getting hard data like utility bills, information about overheating, stuff like that. And the idea is hopefully to then boil that down into recommendations which you can feed into, to bring out the best lessons and learning from what hasn't worked as well for next time.

The overall findings really are profoundly positive, I would say, particularly when you see that high proportions of people that are saying that they would wish to, or that they plan to stay for five or more years. Newham has a really high turnover rate and it's really good to see that Chobham is kind of starting to help it buck that trend, that people are planning to put down roots and stay here.

I mean one of the other key things about it is, it has this east, west green spine running through it, which is a series of play spaces and rain gardens and things like that, that really bring the neighbourhood together. And I think people have really painted a picture for us. We carried out this study during lockdown, it seems that, that was really important, that green space, in kind of getting people through that really difficult time, it brought people together and sort of solidified a sense of community there.

**Narrator:** And can you take some of that learning from this evaluation report, into some of the other areas within the Olympic Park?

**James Halsall:** Yeah, totally. And I think it's important to not... There's obviously a lot of positive lessons as I've talked about, and that it's good to really safeguard those around the importance of place making and location. People are moving here, to be in Stratford, to be near the Park, and because of the transport connections and things like that. But also what we are already doing, is to feed in both the large and small recommendations and learnings from it, into those projects which are on our desks at the moment, in a whole range of different ways, some big, some small. So that is already happening.

**Narrator:** And could that then be used across London?

**James Halsall:** Absolutely, yeah. And we want it to be. What we've done with this report is to share it publicly on our website. People don't often do that. That was a, you could say, risky thing to do. But we are clear that there's really useful positive recommendations that can be used to inform any scheme, any particularly, housing or mixed use scheme, both big and small, and that these are really important things to get right.

There's things like, just say one of the ones that I picked out, was around bike stores and that what we found was that they're used really differently by different blocks and different tenures and different ages. So, in one block it's really full of kids scooters and prams and things like that. And on another block, it's that they're actually quite empty.

So I think seeing, not just saying, oh, we need bike stores, but saying, "How do we facilitate through infrastructure, a shift away from car use, towards a more active and sustainable route of travel, through which these kinds of stores are absolutely fundamental bits of infrastructure?" They need to be practical, they need to be crime resistant, and they need to be really inclusive from anyone from the age of nine months or one month old through to the age of 90, or however old. And we need to be learning from that. People across London and the UK need to be learning from that.

**Narrator:** You've created a community at Chobham Manor. It's clear from the survey that there is a community there. How do you continue that community?

**James Halsall:** I mean, I think there'll obviously be emerging communities across the Olympic Park as new neighborhoods emerge. I do think our job is to set the scene and the community are the people who then move into that. That said, obviously management is really important and that's something that we're, the LLDC is continuing to learn from with its development partners. It's an amazing legacy and it's really nice to be some small part of that, in delivering new neighborhoods, where I really hope that people want to live and that I hope are as sustainable as possible, and as comfortable as possible to live in. And I should say, most importantly, as inclusive as possible. And I think it's really important that we translate some of those ambitions that were inherent in the Olympic and Paralympic games. And it makes sure that those sorts of ambitions around inclusivity and accessibility, including for people with disabilities, that they're really baked in to how we bring these homes forward and our new neighborhoods forward.

**Narrator:** James Halsall. Still to come. We'll find out about plans for the last Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park neighborhood. But first, could this post occupancy evaluation report from the residents of Chobham Manor, prove a real benchmark and a building block for all future housing developments in London, and across the country?

**Lyn Garner, CEO, London Legacy Development Corporation:**

So here today we're talking about policy and post occupancy evaluation review and the importance of that. And hearing this feedback convinces me that, you're all on the right page. But the message is, can the industry really get that message out there? Can we consolidate this? Can we act, to bring it forward as a standard policy?

**Narrator:** London Legacy Development Corporation, Chief Executive Lyn Garner, speaking at a recent Center for London event on what life is like in a sustainable neighborhood, supported by Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Buro Happold and Hawkins Brown.

**Duncan Price:** My name's Duncan Price. I'm a partner at Buro Happold, and I lead our work on sustainability and climate change.

**Louisa Bowles:** My name is Louisa Bowles. I'm partner and sustainability lead at Hawkins Brown.

**Duncan Price:** Post occupancy evaluation of residential neighborhoods, is a non-trivial exercise. We've come in effectively as the post occupancy evaluation experts to help collect data, collect insights and guide the LLDC and what to do next.

**Louisa Bowles:** We all brought our individual skills to the POE. Ours was really focused on the social and the human side, and the community cohesion side of what was happening at Chobham Manor.

**Duncan Price:** There's some heavy lifting that's been done here, in terms of the methodology and the process and also some really valuable insights from this. So LLDC themselves, have commissioned some other post occupancy evaluation of other neighborhoods around the Olympic Park. And I believe the GLA are now thinking, well, how do we standardise this for London? We've got some great policy hooks, for example, the BC-ing policy on energy, for developers to report energy consumption. So I think there's lots of opportunity. And what's great about this study, and LLDC as a client, is that they've been really open and honest about the challenge as well, because it helps to move everybody forward.

**Louisa Bowles:** By not knowing about some issues and building them into their future schemes. Those future schemes are then going to suffer from the same issues. So it's a very sensible and potentially, one might say, a bit brave as well, to put yourself out there and do all of this interrogation because you may find out some things that you thought you were doing brilliantly, you weren't, perhaps. But it's much better to not do something brilliantly over thousands of homes when you can avoid doing so.

**Liz Peace:** Hi, I'm Liz Peace. I'm currently Chair of the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation, although I was for a long period chair of the Centre for London. So many people now ask you what you think of something that you've just had, whether it's your Amazon delivery or that sort of thing. So it's a sort of very obvious thing to do, to ask people whether they are happy with whatever they have bought or where they are living. So I mean the concept's not new, but I think what's going to be really significant is if we can create this as more of a technique, a process that more people do, so that you can actually pull together the lessons that come from it. Because the really important thing is not doing the POE, it's actually what you do with the results you get.

And there'll be different sorts of results. There'll be people that say, "Well, the flower bed's a mess. We want it replanted." Well, you can fix that. If it's something more fundamental, "We don't like living on the top floor when the temperature is in the 90 degrees," then you've got a bigger problem. But the people who are going to be building new sites in the future need to be hearing that sort of thing, because they need to start thinking about how to make the changes now, for those future developments. So it's a great process. It's not new in concept, we just might be calling it something different. But what's key is what you actually do with it.

**Narrator:** And you are a Chair of another development corporation in London. So can you learn from Chobham Manor and from this POE?

**Liz Peace:** Oh, absolutely. And one of the things I keep saying to our board and to our executive is, we must look at not only post occupancy evaluations, but we must look at more generally, what people are saying and doing and how people's behaviors or wants or needs are actually changing. By the time we finish Old Oak and Park Royal, it'll be, what, 30 years hence? Who knows what people are going to be wanting in 30 years time? So you've absolutely got to be adaptable. And I think one of the points that came out of the seminar we held this morning was that, housebuilders tend to get quite traditional. They find something that works and they keep replicating it. Well, you've got to be very open, I think to adaptation, probably even more so in our world now, given things like climate change. So I think it's really important that one keeps effectively pulling up the roots and having a look at what you're doing and seeing whether it's absolutely the right thing and not being afraid to change.

**Narrator:** One of the things you are doing and the London Legacy Development Corporation is doing, is building homes, not houses, and homes are where people live and enjoy living. And that's really integral when you're trying to create a community, which is what's happening at the Olympic Park.

**Liz Peace:** Yeah, I've been very impressed with how the Olympic Park has created that community. I mean, I think it's really important when you hear what people are saying, that you hear those things that are about how they want to live. Do they want access to open space outside? Do they want access to playgrounds for their children? Do they want somewhere where they can grow things? So it's really important that we listen to what people actually want. And then even if we can't do something about it in a development that's already finished, think about how you take it on board for the future.

**Narrator:** But what next for Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park? More than 10 years on from the Games, plans are now in place for the development of the last neighbourhood, Pudding Mill Lane.

**Katherine Hosea, Head of Development, London Legacy Development Corporation:**

Hi, my name's Katherine Hosea. I'm head of Development. I've been with LLDC for about eight years. We've already secured the delivery of four amazing neighborhoods on the park. And Pudding Mill Lane is the last piece of that jigsaw really. And we just in the last week launched a procurement to find a joint venture development partner to deliver Pudding Mill Lane with us, and we're all really excited about that. Pudding Mill Lane is an outstanding site. It's 5.1 hectares. It's located in a prime position on the southern edge of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. A lot of people are now familiar with the site because of the new ABBA Arena, which is temporarily based on Pudding Mill Lane, and it's been attracting huge audiences, which is great to see. And it's really put the site on the map. The transport infrastructure in and around the site is just exemplary. Pudding Mill Lane DLR Station is at the heart of the development. Stratford station is just a short walk away. And that gives access to 10 different railway lines, including the new Elizabeth line.

So from the Pudding Mill Lane site, you can be in Canary Wharf in 11 minutes. You can be in Oxford Circus in 25 minutes. You can be in the city in 17 minutes. As well as that, it also links really well into a great network of walking and cycling routes, which sort of take you directly into the heart of the park. So future residents and businesses at Pudding Mill Lane, will be able to benefit from proximity to London Stadium, to the Aquatic Center, to the ArcelorMittal Orbit, as well as the new UCL East campus, which is right next door. And the Culture and Education District at Stratford Waterfront, which is going to bring the likes of BBC, V&A, London College of Fashion, and Sadler’s Wells, is right on the doorstep. So in my opinion, as a sort of development opportunity, it really couldn't be any better.

**Narrator:** And we've been talking about Chobham Manor on this podcast in particular, what kind of houses will be built on the site at Pudding Mill Lane?

**Katherine Hosea:** So we have outlined planning consent for 948 homes, and a minimum of 45% of those will be affordable housing. So our master plan, when it was being developed, carefully considered the range of housing needs, and at least 51% of those homes will have two or more bedrooms. So it's really perfect for growing families. The type of homes include apartments, townhouses, maisonettes, and we're also going to provide for 40 dedicated later living homes. So it's really an inclusive and family orientated development.

**Narrator:** And it's not just housing that's being built, it's a bit more of a mixed development?

**Katherine Hosea:** That's right. Yeah. So this is our first major mixed use development that we're delivering here on the park, which is really, really exciting. So alongside the residential space that we've just talked about, our vision includes a really rich mix of workspace, retail, and community and leisure uses. And we really want to develop a really green and vibrant new local center and all the uses that support that. So our plans include provision for a nursery, a health center, community space, shops, cafes, and restaurants, as well as a network of inclusive play areas and a series of local courtyards with bio diverse planting.

And in terms of the workspace itself, we're open to ideas on what might come forward, but we're really keen to compliment clusters of the cutting edge businesses that we have in Here East and Hackney Wick, Fish Island Creative Enterprise Zone, International Quarter London, and what's emerging in Eastbank. So the sort of sectors we're imagining will come forward are the knowledge based economy, high-tech innovation, education and research based uses, and creative, cultural, sport and healthy living. So we see those sorts of things as really complimenting the offer that we already have on the park.

**Narrator:** And Katherine, what other benefits will this neighbourhood deliver?

**Katherine Hosea:** So through the delivery of the workspace and the retail space I just talked about, we're expecting Pudding Mill Lane will generate around 2000 jobs. We really want to deliver good growth with employment and skills opportunities for young people and for local people. We want to build space for businesses to start and grow, and to feed into the cluster of innovation that's already growing in the park. We think this site has the potential to become something really, really special. So we're really just looking forward to seeing how things progress and develop.

**Narrator:** Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, five new neighborhoods planned around green spaces and squares, and thousands of houses built to be lasting homes for those who live in them. This is the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Podcast. Want to know more about what is happening? Follow for more stories, or check out queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk