

Publica

Community wealth  
building and inclusive  
development



# A collaboration

## Publica and Volterra support urban development that invests in and contributes to local communities.

There is an industry-wide consensus for a more ambitious inclusive vision for our cities and communities. We know how to act to ensure our cities are sustainable, resilient and just – putting communities at the centre of the new urban agenda, but this requires new, practicable skills.

Publica and Volterra have been demonstrating this new skillset through a series of successful high-quality, impactful programmes for landowners, local councils and community organisations. New development and existing communities can be integrated through an inclusive and principle-led approach that has been pioneered by Publica and Volterra, which is based on a combination of spatial and socio-economic analysis.

Our work recognises, measures and shares the value of people, places and the networks that connect them. This enables us to build evidence for inclusive and participatory urban change that can then be clearly communicated. We thrive on complex projects, where long-term thinking can ensure meaningful contribution right from the beginning of a project.

This document provides an overview of how we work with our clients and the unique ways our collaborations add value to urban development projects.



Truman Brewery Masterplan, Publica and Volterra

## An interdisciplinary partnership for complex urban projects to foster inclusive development and community wealth building.

We take a holistic approach to understanding urban change, recognising that the most complete and grounded analysis needs to be participatory and reflect the communities and users of a place. This robust evidence base results in a clear communicable set of principles about urban change, told through the combination of on-the-ground experience of the built environment and incisive data on key socio-economic impacts and implications. From an embedded position within the design team on these complicated projects and sites, we translate our insights into tangible guidance for the design of physical spaces.



### Six ways we add value to projects

1

#### A deep understanding of place

We undertake immersive, multi-layered research to understand the unique qualities of a place and the needs of its local community, using participative survey methods, forensic field work and in-depth data analysis.

2

#### Qualitative and quantitative analysis

We articulate the impacts that can't be monetised using qualitative, on-the-ground observations to bring data-driven insights to life.

3

#### A bespoke, principle-led process

We develop a specific approach for each client and project, rooted in a unique set of principles about the site and its social and spatial opportunities.

4

#### A specialist, multi-disciplinary team

We are small, dedicated teams of passionate and experienced professionals, involved throughout the life of all projects.

5

#### Clear and compelling communication

We create strong, clear visual communications that reflect the research and principles for all to share, for internal decision-making and multiple external audiences.

6

#### A trusted voice

We have a deep knowledge of the policy landscape across London and the UK, and provide guidance to decision-makers at local and regional levels.

# Our work

Publica and Volterra have extensive experience working together to articulate and enhance the public benefits of major mixed-use developments. Our specialisms are complementary and integrated, creating a 360° holistic approach to urban development projects.

The three projects described here are a small selection from an extensive project list spanning two decades.

## Islington masterplan

We compiled the evidence base for the social value strategy for a major new commercial development in North London to ensure the uses at the site would support both the tenants and the wider community while strengthening the placemaking qualities of the development.

## NHS Estate

We worked with a NHS estate in Central London to articulate the public benefits of their proposed redevelopment scheme and to help the Trust better understand how they could contribute to their local communities.

## Spitalfields masterplan

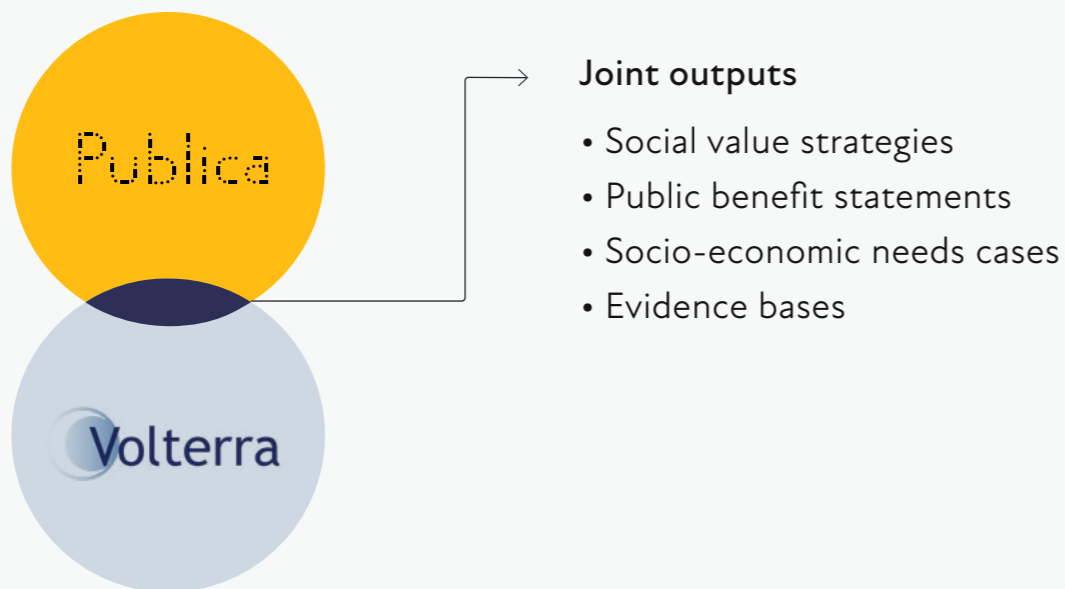
We helped the landowner of a significant site in East London study the demographics, economic activity, and existing community assets of the surrounding residential neighbourhood, to support the masterplan in addressing the needs of its neighbours.

# Our joint approach

Combining our skillsets and methodologies, we author high-quality reports for our clients, produced using a robust approach that combines qualitative and quantitative research.

Our work is grounded in considering local communities from the outset, and we believe it's vital to truly understand the local area to ensure that projects are delivering changes that are grounded in local need.

When we are brought on at the early stages in a project, our insights and deep place-immersion can help inform the design process, reducing risk and enhancing benefits by embedding social impact into the project's foundations.



## A three-step process

### 1 Understanding local needs through data and research and identifying opportunities that respond to them

Site immersion, photography, mapping of existing assets, audits of how people use public spaces at different times of day and year.

Conducting interviews with stakeholders to understand constraints, interests, and priorities, and managing a formal engagement process undertaken by specialist teams.

Socio-economic and health baseline and policy analysis. Engaging with communities and stakeholders to identify opportunities to deliver social value which builds on existing programmes, capitalises on the strengths of a proposed development, goes beyond policy, and relates to local need.

### 2 Estimating the impacts of a proposed intervention

Reviewing and assessing the designs and plans for a proposed development in specific spatial and physical terms, and linking this to the quantitative data story.

Creating bespoke models to demonstrate the impact of proposals and going beyond the raw numbers to provide valuable context and identify trends that are shaping the economic landscape.

### 3 Developing clear, realistic insights and communicating them in compelling visual ways

Setting the principles for social and urban integration for projects big and small.

Designing diagrams, visuals, and beautiful reports to express the findings of the analysis in a clear and engaging way for internal and external use.

Transparently presenting driving assumptions of the technical assessment, enabling clients to focus on the key issues and navigate uncertainty with clarity. Concise and coherent narrative about how a scheme will meet local and wider objectives.

# Selected clients

Publica and Volterra have worked together with clients ranging from public institutions to private developers, all of whom are interested in articulating the social impact of proposed developments. We have worked with the institutions shown here both as a pair and as individual firms. In addition to these, we each have extensive lists of clients with whom we've worked over the past twenty years.

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ESTATE

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LAND  
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## Volterra

Volterra is a socio-economic consultancy specialising in demonstrating and optimising the social, economic and health impacts of development and infrastructure. We have worked on some of the most complex and high profile schemes in the UK.

We excel in delivering high quality work by uncovering compelling insights from complex, varied datasets and through effective stakeholder engagement. In collaboration with our clients and project teams, we focus on identifying opportunities to deliver additional social and economic value. This includes community wealth building principles to deliver initiatives related to health, employment, skills development, local businesses and affordable workspace, in a way aligned with planning frameworks.

Volterra is renowned for producing bespoke analyses that transparently and robustly assess the overall impact of development and infrastructure proposals. We are experts in identifying the complex linkage between infrastructure, places, policy interventions, and economic success.

## Publica

Publica is an urban design and research-led studio creating more inclusive and welcoming places in our cities.

We have four areas of practice: we write policy guidance for statutory decision-makers; we study local and international trends in urban development and research important themes that are shaping our cities; we produce public realm strategies with a range of thematic focuses and areas of expertise; and we design and build urban landscapes and spaces between buildings. All use clear, beautiful and compelling visual communications, for our clients and for everyone who uses public space and is involved in urban change.

We are known for our rigorous thinking, our interdisciplinary approach, and ability to facilitate conversations about complex urban themes, and sought after for our creative, multi-disciplinary approach to understanding and delivering bold, inclusive urban change. Publica's research methodology is place-specific and participatory, recognising that valued spaces, heritage, needs and experiences are unique to all neighbourhoods, and that diverse communities use and value spaces differently.



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