**Seb Coe:**

At our closing ceremony, we can say that these were games by everyone.

**Narrator:**

When Lord Coe sold the London 2012 bid to the International Olympic Committee, he spoke about legacy. He spoke about inspiring a generation. He spoke about the future, an era of regeneration, transformation, and innovation.

In this episode of My London Legacy, 10 years on from the London Olympic and Paralympic games, we'll focus on the latest legacy initiative, SHIFT, which brings together the public and private sectors, education, and local community enterprises, as well as tech companies, all working together to help solve some of the biggest challenges facing London and cities around the world.

**Emma Frost: Director of Innovation, Sustainability & Community, LLDC**

We're thrilled to be formally launching SHIFT today at London Tech Week. SHIFT is the innovation partnership and program at the Park focused on enabling better urban futures. SHIFT will bring a program, a focused investment to build the Park's reputation as an inclusive innovation district, focused on exploring solutions to the biggest problems we face in 21st century [inaudible 00:01:19].

**Narrator:**

Emma Frost, the director of innovation at the London Legacy Development Corporation who was in South Korea to simultaneously launch SHIFT in conjunction with the official closing ceremony of London Tech Week 2022, which was held at Here East on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The ambition is to create a new inclusive innovation district on the Park, an urban test bed for new processes and technologies. Here's Francesca Colloca, the London Legacy Development Corporation's head of innovation.

**Francesca Colloca, Head of Innovation, LLDC**

SHIFT is the partnership of seven founding partners that come together to invest in an idea that what we've got at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park presents us the opportunity to solve some of society's biggest issues in how we live together in cities of the future. So, it's a partnership. It's going to be a program of investment, in research and development projects that test new innovation products, new tech products. It's going to be doing innovation challenges. So, callouts to startups and growing businesses to solve some of the issues here on the Park.

**Narrator:**

When I use words like sustainability, climate change, these are big global issues. How can a partnership of seven founding members on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park play their part in solving these issues or helping to solve these issues?

**Francesca Colloca:**

A lot of those big global issues like climate change, how climate change impacts our health, the quality of the air that we breathe in cities, the noise that we experience from congestion in cities, the inequalities that exist in our cities, they're big global issues, but they're experienced very locally here in east London as well. And what we can do at SHIFT is identify some of those problems that local communities are having and work with communities, work with startups, work with academics and experts to try and address some of those questions directly at a local level. And so, what we're doing is building an ecosystem of partners that can identify those problems locally and how they impact on local communities and start to trial some solutions at a local level. That will have implications for the globe as well, and we absolutely aim to kind of export those ideas globally so that they're relevant for other places.

**Narrator:**

So, to be a successful innovation district, what things need to come together? What are the pieces of your jigsaw?

**Francesca Colloca:**

What's unique about the Olympic Park is the mix and the blend of physical, economic, social assets. So, what I mean by that here on the Park, we have 560 acres of beautiful biodiverse parklands, roads, waterways, rivers, business districts, new housing neighborhoods, loads of workspace, public realm, public squares, all these kind of physical assets can be used as sites to test technology. So that's one thing. The other thing we've got is a really diverse local community. So, for local boroughs in Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest who together make east London probably the most diverse place on the planet, over 105 world languages spoken locally and some of the youngest population in the UK. That population is full of ideas, talent, and that presents a real opportunity when it comes to trialing new products, new tech solutions.

**Narrator:**

All the conversations that you have had to get to this point, I'm sure outcomes or measurable outcomes have been talked about. When we sit down maybe in a year, maybe in 10 years, what will be the success of SHIFT?

**Francesca Colloca:**

In 10 years, if we can point to the fact that we have solved some of the biggest issues around climate change and some of those ideas have come from east London and the Olympic park, that will be the measure of success.

**Narrator:**

Among the seven core partners of SHIFT, which include the University of Arts London, University College London, Loughborough University London, Plexal, and the London Legacy Development Corporation and Lendlease, and the venue for the launch event, Here East.

**Gavin Poole, CEO, Here East**

I'm Gavin Poole. I'm the chief executive of Here East.

**Narrator:**

Today is the launch of SHIFT. What is the connection between Here East and SHIFT?

**Gavin Poole:**

Well, SHIFT, I think is an evolution of what Here East has been doing for the last decade, particularly since 2015 when we opened our doors, how the university first opened. [inaudible 00:05:59] campus is now grown and evolved into a huge Olympic park-wide initiative.

**Narrator:**

And it's right, this can't happen with one organization leading. It has to be a partnership.

**Gavin Poole:**

I think having a partnership means you've got to buy-in working towards the same set of objectives, which there'll be many. And some people have got more priorities or place more importance on some objectives and on others, which is fine because that's where their business imperative is. But I think when you're looking at a scale of driving an innovation district, thinking about the types of businesses that can come here, the research that can come here, the benefits that can be seen into the wider community, you need everybody putting together. And I think having a partnership is absolutely the right way to go.

**Jake Heitland, Place & Growth Manager/Urbanisation Practice Manager, Lendlease Europe**

My name's Jake Heitland and I'm a place and growth manager in SHIFT lead at Lendlease Europe, working across our projects across the continent, mostly focusing on our work here at setting up the SHIFT innovation district at the Queen Elizabeth Park. As one of the seven founding members, for us, we're thinking about our own mission zero obligations. As a large multinational development company, we're going through a transition similar to a fossil fuel company going to renewable energy. So, we know that we can't do that alone. And this is a way of coming together and realizing very quickly in the early partnership conversations that we're trying to solve unprecedented challenges in unprecedented ways. So, for us, it's a really big commitment around how we solve the big kind of global issues that we're working on but together locally here in Stratford. And under a kind of collective mission as well. This is all about intentionality. This is not innovation for the fun of it.

**Narrator:**

Are the ingredients then that make up a successful innovation district?

**Jake Heitland:**

So, we can go back to the theory from Julie Wagner and Bruce Katz who wrote the report back in 2014, I believe on the identifying what an innovation district is. And the three key ingredients there kind of physical assets, economic assets, and networking assets. So physical assets is your trains, your roads, your parks, et cetera. The economic assets, so those big kind of anchor institutions, that's your academia, that's your big private sector businesses, that's your tech campuses.

And then the networking bit is around how are we driving that collaboration, that intentionality, how is it all coming together? So, I think we already have all of those ingredients at the Park. And what's funny is that they've naturally emerged over the last 10 years since the launch of the Olympics in 2012. And I think now what we're doing is not saying innovation hasn't happened and now we're starting fresh. It is innovation's been happening, but now we're coming together on a collective ambition, kind of drawing a line in the sand and saying, "Right, we need to direct this innovation to help solve some of these big challenges being faced by life and cities in the 21st century."

**Gavin Poole:**

I would say that we are at the end of phase one. And phase one for me, if you look back, is pre-games games, post games. Legacy was always seen from the run up to 2012 was a 20-year program, and we were 10 years in. So we're halfway through the legacy program. Phase two is probably more exciting. We can move beyond, looking backwards at the Games, celebrating, not just the Games, they were remarkable, but celebrating everything that has happened for the 10 years post the Games, which if you map that out, numbers of homes, numbers of jobs, level of investment, the complete transformation of this whole area, then you can say, "Okay, that is in part done. Now we've got drive the change, and the innovation we've always said would come." End of phase two. Let's keep on looking forward. That's the more exciting piece.

**Jake Heitland:**

I think one of the things I'm most proud of what we've adapted into SHIFT is this mission-oriented innovation model adapted from Mariana Mazzucato who's a professor and economist at UCL. And this is again thinking about your big innovation agenda is, of course, informed by the problems of today that we need to adapt to 1.5 degree world, for example, but how that problem looks and feels at a local level is much different. Same problem. One is really big. One's really macro. At a micro level, you might have a mom and her daughter at a bus stop with diesel buses going by, and her daughter's getting asthma because of the emissions.

Okay. We know air pollution's a big issue, but actually this bus stop is experiencing this issue, and it's causing this health impact for this person. And we need to identify those challenges of lived experiences in cities to actually inform our work on health, for example, our work on climate adaptation. Everyone who lives here knows their community better than anyone else. And using their kind of lived experience issues to inform our big strategies but kind of a top-down and bottom-up way of working. So, we're going to meet in the middle with, I think, some really incredible innovation challenges and ways of working.

**Gavin Poole:**

We've been on a journey to carefully curate the type of businesses and organizations that come to Here East. We don't say yes to everybody. It is a non-traditional real estate play where we heavily curate the type of people who come here because we want people to be with us who are going to engage within our own Here East community but also participate in the programs that reach into the local community and beyond across London. And I think getting that right and then expanding that across the park means it's an evolution of what we set out to achieve from the very beginning.

**Jake Heitland:**

It's about asking the right questions when we're designing things when we're bringing together innovation challenges and making sure that at each step of the way, we're building this kind of inclusive mantra into what we're doing. Because a lot of people use this word. It's a bit of faff sometimes. And what I'm really excited about is a collective ambition here to work in inclusive manner is real.

And it's already here. It's already kind of the way that... It's the business as usual of east London. So, I really want to work with that, harness that and bring that in. And that I think disrupts... The other companies are going to come and join us, the other big private sector companies that we hope to come move in at IQL. So, these are massive challenges, but again, from a lendings perspective, we're thinking about if we learn something here, we've got a portfolio of projects globally. It's much more cost-efficient to test one thing there. And if it works, well, then we can share that learning outside and elsewhere. So this is us also learning how to innovate in a better way as well.

**Narrator:**

The founding partners of SHIFT work with more than 250 knowledge intensive organizations on Queen Elizabeth Olympic park. 5% of these are large scale international firms, but there's also a strong startup in entrepreneurial scene. SHIFT will use its unique attributes to trial new technologies to build better, healthier, and more sustainable places for the future.

**Marion Marincat, Founder and CEO of Mumbli:**

Hi, my name is Marion Marat. I am the founder and CEO of Mumbli. Mumbli is an IOT-based hearing tech company that has launched the first hearing wellness district in the Olympic Park. I experienced a sudden hearing reduction in my mid-twenties. And that then follow with having hearing devices, which the technology is absolutely fantastic. However, the background noise and the idea of being in a background noise has absolutely changed the way I was able to interact in social spaces. And then I found out quite recently after that more than 30% of the population has an issue with hearing challenges, so either sensitive to background noise or have hearing issues. So, I wanted to change that. I wanted to change the way I interact in social spaces, which I think everyone loves to be part of the conversation. We probably had this ability to interact with staff and customers in ways that normally a startup doesn't have the privilege to have that conversation.

So if you imagine a small product and you want to develop something small, software, you get out the building, you speak to a few people, and they would feedback straight away. If you want to change something more of a systemic level that's more at a city level, then you end up in this situation where you are not going to have venue operators and policy makers. And so, on being on board with you or having to test something. So, the fact that we had SHIFT, the benefit was one, really short timeline to test something that could have taken years otherwise.

Two, the conversation with venue operators was, "Look, this is a free trial, and you will benefit from it, but we can't promise when and how much you're going to benefit from it. We just want you to be open to a conversation." And that was brilliant. That was fantastic. And then we've seen staff members of these venues benefiting from the fact that we optimize sound levels, and we optimize for audio accessibility. We certified venues for sound, which, again, if you want to develop a new regulatory system, how do you do that as a startup who's going to fund you? So, SHIFT was absolutely brilliant for us in that regard, and I'm sure we will reap the benefits, as I said, for, for a long time.

**Narrator:**

One of the things people say to me about Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is it's the most inclusive place in the country in terms of accessibility. Is that your experience, or are you part of that journey to make it?

**Marion Marincat:**

I do think that the Olympic Park is the most open to the conversation and most adaptable in that sense. And it's probably further than anyone else has managed to achieve with a conversation where everyone knows that this needs to be the case and everyone is willing to have that conversation in the Olympic Park. And that is a huge achievement. I agree that is probably the most successful at implementing inclusive innovation.

**Narrator:**

SHIFT will also focus on local communities in their design testing and delivery. That means local people will benefit from the training and skills programs and job opportunities as well as support for entrepreneurs from all backgrounds. One of those is James Kaguima, who also sits on the legacy youth board. But first, Alex Russell, executive chair of Hackney Wick and Fish Island Community Development Trust.

**Alex Russell, Executive Chair of Hackney Wick and Fish Island Community Development Trust:**

We're really excited about SHIFT. We think this marks a kind of legacy 2.0. And we think there's an opportunity for organizations like ours that are really working across the community with lots of different organizations to actually start to have a stronger relationship with some of the bigger partners within the SHIFT movement, bringing what all of the skills and experience and leverage that they have into the community. With our network, we can work with them on great projects. That mean that people who are living here, working here can have more opportunities to get involved with whatever's happening in and around the Park.

**James Kaguima:**

Hi, my name is James Kaguima, and I'm an award-winning social entrepreneur and founder of Skate Cabal. And I'm very passionate about social entrepreneurship and solving like complex social problems. I'm happy that SHIFT is being created. And it's also like near my doorstep. I actually live near Olympic Park. So, Skate Cabal is basically an award-winning platform that helps amplifies the stories and safe spaces for the roller-skating community. And the reason why I started the project was I was just initially inspired by how the roller-skating community was very like united and welcoming of like people. And a lot of people have said that it has helped them in terms of their mental health and wellbeing. Majority of the people in the roller-skating community have complained that there's like a lack of dedicated safe spaces. We probably hope to like work with SHIFT, possibly to run events so we can better utilize the space that's already in Olympic Park.

**Alex Russell:**

We're living in a place where there's quite a lot of change, and there's quite a lot of transiency. So, people that are living here and working here need to feel and be able to participate in all the opportunities and actually being able to develop some of their own ideas. So, there's a lot of innovation that's already happening at a very grassroots level. So, you see creative makers, for example, an artist who will take over a disused warehouse and turn it into a whole range of studios and event spaces and activities. And we have that in space. We have this kind of frugal innovation that's happening at the grassroots level. And we think that the SHIFT will enable some of that to be protected and preserved. It will enable it to be replicated in other places and maybe scaled.

**James Kaguima:**

I moved to Stratford in 2011 as well, and that was like a year before Olympics started. And when I was 16, I was a youth worker. I joined my local youth center, and they appointed me to be someone that pitches for funding. And when I pitched the funding, basically my idea was to like to create a community focus sports program. And I managed to secure the funding. And that was like my first step into social entrepreneurship. And then in law school, like in my last year, I've set up something called Hasani watches. And for every wooden watch that I sold, a tree would be planted in the Amazon forest because I partnered with a charity called One Tree Planted. Like from there, I just always been interested in like finding like innovative ways to solve whether it's environmental or social or like any sort of social issues that could be solved by either business or tech.

**Alex Russell:**

Climate change and sort of environmental concerns are quite big in Hackney Wick. Our research study has said that this is one of the priorities for the area going forward. We live on a floodplain and people are very aware that they are directly impacted by climate change. A lot of residents talk about the rising price of energy. It directly impacts people. And so, what we are trying to do is develop a project where we try to mitigate some of that, working with businesses who are trying to tackle climate change in various different ways and helping them to find space at affordable rate to be able to do what they're doing and work with residents.

**Emma Frost:**

We're thrilled to be formally launching SHIFT today at London Tech Week, the perfect backdrop for an ambitious program that will use technology, creativity, and collaboration to solve some of the difficult questions about how we live together in cities of the future.

**Narrator:**

This is My London Legacy, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park podcast. We've been hearing all about SHIFT and now it wants you. If you are a partnership, investor, commissioner, or business that wants to come and trial your innovation on the Park, check out queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk for more details and come and work in a new inclusive innovation district.

**Francesca Colloca:**

Queen Elizabeth Olympic park has the potential to be the exemplar of how future cities are. How we move around cities, how we live in them, how green they are, and how everything's perfectly integrated. The Olympic Park can be that better urban future that we really need.