

Draft Policies for our Neighbourhood.

These are in addition/add detail to the Lambeth Local Plan, the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

KNOWLEDGE & BETTER DESIGN

42 | *local people told us to...*

Require developers to give access to all relevant information concerned with a planning application including reasons for; higher buildings, reduction in affordable housing, and financial offers for planning gain.

KOV9: Key information shaping design and community benefits from development

This Neighbourhood Plan strongly supports Policy H2 ‘Delivering affordable housing in the Lambeth Local Plan as a cornerstone to the delivery of the Local Plan’s vision for ‘Mixed, cohesive, more stable communities that thrive on the diversity of their population, including different ethnic groups, faiths and sexual orientations, the young, the elderly and disabled people.’

H2 policy states:

- (a) The council will seek the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing when negotiating on individual private residential and mixed-use schemes, in line with the following borough-wide targets.
- (i) On sites of at least 0.1 hectares or capable of accommodating 10 or more homes, at least 50 per cent of units should be affordable where public subsidy is available, or 40 per cent without public subsidy. The artificial subdivision of sites or phasing of development with the effect of circumventing the policy requirement will not be permitted.
- (ii) On sites providing fewer than 10 units, a financial contribution towards the delivery of off-site affordable housing will be sought, in line with the council’s preferred methodology.

In light of the Lambeth Plan Vision, shaping a raft of Local Plan polices and to participate effectively in environmental decisions that affect communities in the KOV area, Applicants for major development (10+ dwellings or 0.1 hectares+ site) are required without exception to publicise all relevant factual information explaining the reasoning for:

a) decisions on building heights, and
b) reduction in affordable housing proportion measured against the London Plan and Local Plan policies targets which ever is higher, and
c) financial offers made related to planning gain (Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy)

KOV9: To what extent can you support this draft policy? (yes=green dot|amber dot= in parts|red dot =can’t support)

418/390 | *local people told us to...*

Big developments must consult local people early in the design process before submitting a planning application and produce a Planning/ Design Brief. Big applications must also undergo an independent Design Review before decisions are taken.

KOV10 Better Design: Design Brief and Design Review

In line with the National Planning Policy framework §66 ‘Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing the design of the new development should be looked on more favourably’.

Applicants preparing major development proposals are strongly encouraged to facilitate a proactive, early and meaningful engagement process with local residents and other stakeholders prior to submitting a planning application. This is achieved by:

- a) Demonstrating the use and application of local knowledge and reflection on community concerns in developing a distinct design approach and
- b) preparing a **Design Brief** through collaborative planning workshops with the local community early in the design process. A list of useful Design Brief aspects to be addressed is provided as guidance below and
- c) detailing and publishing how the design proposal has benefited from working collaboratively in a **‘Statement of Community Design Engagement’**, and by
- d) putting the proposal through an **independent Design Review** process to further improve the design quality of the proposed design (NNPF §62); and
- e) Lambeth Council’s own Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) urges developers of major developments to undertake consultations with the community before they make planning applications. Lambeth gives more detail, encouraging pre-consultation both before plans are drawn up, and again to seek views on the evolving development proposal. This Neighbourhood Plan promotes the **modification of Lambeth Council’s Local Application Requirements list - Item 39** to require a developer to declare and whether pre-consultation has met these standards.

KOV10: To what extent can you support this draft policy? (yes=green dot|amber dot= in parts|red dot =can’t support)

Design Brief Guidance

A Design Brief shall include all relevant information needed to facilitate an informed and effective consultation, which normally would include:

- a) A site map showing the site’s location and its context within its immediate neighbourhood.
- b) An illustrative layout that shows how the proposed development could be accommodated on the site.
- c) Scale, footprint, bulk and height of buildings.
- d) To scale views of the bulk form of the development, especially towers, eg through audited wireframe illustrations from a variety of eye level view points.
- e) An assessment of the sunlight and daylight impact on new and existing dwellings and on amenity space, both that provided for the development and on adjacent land, through assessment under BRE standards (xxxx).
- Mix of dwelling types and tenure.
- f) Design style and guidelines – proposed designs for the development are of high quality, in keeping with the character of the area
- g) Infrastructure to support the proposed development – especially access, parking, cycle and pedestrian ways and any required traffic congestion and parking assessments.
- h) Public amenities, open spaces and playgrounds are provided as appropriate as part of the development.
- i) The need to increase capacity for schools and/or health services.
- j) Landscaping and publicly accessible open spaces.
- k) The location of trees and any that may be affected by the development.
- l) Indicative timing and phasing of the proposed development.
- m) Community benefits to be provided.
- n) An analysis of how the development proposals comply with the whole policy framework including the Neighbourhood Plan.

Note: ‘Headline Lambeth Planning Policy is for 40% of all flats in new developments to be “affordable”. This is planning jargon for requiring the developer to subsidise out of his development profits a proportion of the flats he builds so that they can be rented out at below market values. Some are “social rent”, others “discounted market rent” (about 80% of market rent) and others “intermediate” (often shared ownership, that is, part own, part rent). Given the number of flats being built in Vauxhall/Albert Embankment, and the highly profitable development of luxury apartments along the Thames, this should by now have given us about 1400 affordable units. Instead we get about 700, because Lambeth is argued down by confidential “viability” studies, never exposed to public scrutiny. (A viability study calculates whether likely value of sales less estimated build costs (which is called the residual land value) is sufficiently more than a benchmark land value that the developer will make at least the Government set benchmark profit range from his development. If not, he is allowed to reduce expensive obligations like providing affordable housing, until his profit, calculated in this way, gets back to benchmark levels). Plainly, in such studies developers have a commercial interest in estimating value of sales conservatively, build costs pessimistically, and pushing up benchmark land values to the greatest extent planning guidance will allow them, to maximise their profits. Whenever such viability studies are made public (often only in planning appeals, when the developer is appealing against a refusal by the planning committee), all sorts of arguable assumptions are exposed, and there are strong suspicions that if viability studies were routinely published with the planning application, the interested public could identify questionable assumptions at an early stage, and there would be a deal more affordable housing provided.

The Information Tribunal has now ruled in two landmark cases that such studies should be published, citing the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR): “The objective of the EIR is to allow the public and in this case the affected community to have relevant factual information in time for them to participate effectively in environmental decision making.” [Per Judge Warren, giving judgement in the Greenwich case] Lambeth Council has begun to consult on a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) providing for more openness about viability assessments, while still allowing developers to plead confidentiality “exceptionally”. In our experience, developers are highly attached to confidentiality in such matters, and if Lambeth Council once allows itself to accept a viability study on confidential terms (ie labelled confidential), the developer can easily thwart attempts to make the information public.

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