

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS & WIDER ISSUES FROM PLANNING APPLICATIONS IN PECKHAM TOWN CENTRE – DEPUTATION COMMUNITY COUNCIL 29TH JUNE 2016-06-27

Thanks for hearing us. We're local members of the Peckham Planning Network.

We are Eileen Conn, Paula Orr, Derek Kinrade, Kay Nooney, Corinne Turner, Raf Mir.

The Network brings together local people who want to learn about planning and take an active interest in planning matters as they affect Peckham town centre. It's part of Peckham Vision's community planning project which the Community Council Neighbourhood Fund has supported. Thank you very much for that.

This year there has been a rush of planning applications right across the town centre.

Cumulative effects

All these piecemeal developments impact on our town centre and its conservation. Taken together that effect is profound. It's changing the character of Peckham and it's failing to address the need for social housing. We think this should be on the Community Council agenda. We can look at it all through three topics:

- Housing,
- Peckham's townscape and
- Community involvement.

Housing

One after another the proposals say it isn't viable for them to provide affordable housing. We all know that even 'affordable' is often unaffordable, so that's terrible. New developments should not be at the expense of local people. But prices and rents for houses, flats and business premises are rising out of reach. Local people are being pushed out of our own area. We need the 50% promised by Sadiq Khan, the new London Mayor.

To do that we have to know how it's all adding up and what the facts are about the viability. We need an accumulating total of private, mixed and social housing numbers and percentages. And we need to have the viability figures and comment on them. The new procedures for that are still not right and can be improved.

There seems to be a tendency for good quality living spaces to be sacrificed for building greater numbers of dwellings. So we need a running comparison tally of the size and design of living spaces, and a look at how this can affect health and wellbeing.

These multiplying developments are going to have a big impact on already stretched local amenities and services. So we also need to know how the extra demand for doctors, dentists, maternity services, school places and train and bus services is adding up.

Townscape

The heights of buildings are creeping ever higher; where what was a maximum is becoming the minimum. Solid much higher buildings are going to tower over the lower

ones in Rye Lane and the High Street. Passageways and spaces between buildings are disappearing. Existing natural habitats and greenspaces get designed out. One development is one thing. When it is beginning to be every development, taken together the plans that are coming forward are going to change dramatically the look and feel of the town centre, which is after all a Conservation Area.

The piecemeal developments are exacerbating the effects of not having a strong public realm policy reflecting the Conservation Area.

Car parking is a big issue. The demand is increasing while capacity is being reduced. Traders are worrying they'll lose their customers. Residents of new dwellings can't have parking permits. How many know that, and how will their visitors, deliveries and building works be accommodated?

Community involvement

Most who have given comments on a planning application have a tale to tell of its difficulties; some are horror stories! The Council's planning system for this still has a long way to go to make it simple and accessible. We have many suggestions to achieve this.

Summary

We support the regeneration of Peckham which is positive and welcome. But the cumulative effects of the increased pace and scale of developments may wreck the town centre's nature and character with its particular unique blend of social and economic activities.

The Council needs to pay attention to the cumulative effects of individual site proposals.

The Community Council has an important role in this to develop what is best for the town centre. We have had a discussion with Cllr Dolezal who welcomed our approach. Cllr Williams has agreed to meet us for a discussion of the issues we are identifying. [issues leaflet.] We think that positive actions can come of this which will help councillors to make better decisions.

So we ask for the Community Council's support for these matters to be explored with the Council, and for a report back to you. This could contribute to the Community Council's future work.

We hope that these topics we have raised can also contribute to the workshop discussions this evening about themes and topics for future meetings.

Eileen Conn
29 June 2016