

## **Notes accompanying Deputation by local residents and members of the Peckham Planning Network (\*PPN) to Peckham & Nunhead Community Council 29th June 2016**

### **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS & WIDER ISSUES FROM PLANNING APPLICATIONS IN PECKHAM TOWN CENTRE**

This year there has been a rush of planning applications right across Peckham town centre. A single development might have only a limited impact, but as the town centre is essentially a 'couple of intersecting main streets' surrounded by residential properties, the cumulative effect of numerous developments becomes much more significant. We have some suggestions for taking account of these cumulative effects of piecemeal developments. These include the following.

#### **HOUSING**

##### **What type of housing?**

New developments should satisfy the needs of existing residents and the local community without causing house prices and rents for houses, flats and business premises to rise beyond their reach, forcing them to move out of their area. We suggest:

- a running tally for this Community Council area of the permissions for private, mixed and social housing, to be included in a new Cumulative Effects section in each planning report.

##### **Viability assessments**

In March 2016 Southwark Council adopted a policy requiring the financial appraisals and assessments of the viability of providing new affordable housing to be published. However, since several private developers have proposed it is not viable to include any affordable housing, it is essential for local people to see how these assessments are made and be given enough time to comment. We suggest:

- a review with us of the way that the developers' assessment of viability works, to ensure its clarity and usefulness.

##### **Design**

There is now a tendency for good quality living spaces to be sacrificed for building greater numbers of dwelling units. This is building up problems for the future health and wellbeing of the people who have to live in them. We suggest:

- the cumulative effects section in planning reports should include a running comparison tally of the size of the living spaces and their effects.

##### **Impact on local services**

We need to keep track of the increased demand from these developments on already stretched services, such as doctors, dentists, maternity services, school places and train and bus services. We suggest:

- a running tally of any increased demand on services is included in the new cumulative effects section.

#### **TOWNSCAPE**

##### **Building heights**

Several aspects of developments in specific areas are beginning to emerge as having cumulative effects on the look and feel of the town centre. For example, a prevailing maximum height of 3 to 4 storeys is the current norm in the town centre, with taller buildings the exception. This is now being treated as a minimum, with each new development rising higher than the one before.

- The cumulative effect of these separate developments on the nature of the townscape needs an urgent review to strengthen the guidance for planning applicants and planning officers.

##### **Public realm**

The town centre needs an overall design plan so that individual developments enhance it. This includes design and quality of materials which do justice to the modern and historic parts of our townscape, respecting the value of our local identity through the Conservation Area and heritage initiatives. We suggest:

- a review with us of the policy and guidance on Peckham town centre public realm.

## **Biodiversity & green space**

A related matter is the overall greenness of the area, providing habitats for nature that increase biodiversity and people's access to green space. But what we are seeing is the loss of these valuable spaces and the 'green chains' needed by people and wildlife.

- An overall public realm design should have at its core connected spaces for natural habitats and accessible green spaces which developers need to reflect in their individual plans.

## **Car parking**

The efficiency of town centre workings, especially the transit of goods and people, and the ability to maintain a healthy environment for all, relies on the delicate balance, coordination, and maintenance of all forms of access spaces. Many of these are being lost without thorough consideration of the impacts, making permeability difficult. We suggest:

- a review of the effects and working of the car parking policy on town centre businesses and local residents.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Participation**

There are continuing examples of very poor communication and discussion with those affected by development plans prior to submission. This is very wasteful of the time of local people having to cope with very poor plans needing much scrutiny too late in the process, and extra unnecessary work for planning officers and ward councillors. We suggest:

- a review with us of the way this can be improved and enable more people to become involved.

### **Planning procedures**

We have these suggestions to improve the procedures:

- A review with us and other frequent users of the details of the planning applications website to improve its public accessibility.
- The creation of a transparent process for the timing of decisions to determine a case under delegated authority.
- To create automatic call-in for decision by the Planning Committee in the Peckham town centre conservation area, for example when there is change of use, new buildings, increased heights, or alteration of historic features.

## **SUMMARY**

We support the continued regeneration of Peckham which is positive and welcome. But the cumulative effects of the increased pace and scale of developments are not in accord with the nature and character of Peckham town centre with its particular unique blend of social and economic activities. More attention needs to be paid to the cumulative effects of individual site proposals and to develop ways to guide new proposals to respect the nature and character of Peckham town centre.

We suggest that these topics of Housing, Townscape and Community Engagement be considered as themes or topics for this year's Community Council work plan.

We look forward to discussing these matters with Councillors, and how the discussion can be taken forward for the benefit of Peckham town centre and local people.

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\*The PPN (Peckham Planning Network) has developed from local people working together in responding to planning issues in Peckham town centre. It is part of Peckham Vision's community planning project which the Community Council Neighbourhood Fund has supported.

For further information: email [info@peckhamvision.org](mailto:info@peckhamvision.org)  
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