

Planning Essentials

What the planning system is designed to do.



Sat 28 October
2017

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Introduction to Planning

- To most people planning is something you do for a project or event.
- Or then again Maybe it's because a neighbour has put in for permission to build a huge extension.
- We're starting this session thinking about government strategic planning; covering all local issues from housing to health and for the next 5, 10 & up to 15 yrs.
- Enable the right developments in right place at right time.
- Ultimate focus is to secure benefit to local communities and local economies!!

What's the Purpose of Planning?

Identifies -

- *What needed and where;*
- *What needs protection;*
- *What needs to be enhanced;*

....in order to -

- *Ensure sustainable development (homes, jobs);*
- *Enable decisions be taken at the most local level;*
- *Ensure protection of historic/ natural environment;*

... & provide framework to evaluate applications.

What I'm going to cover

National Planning System & Hierarchy

The Changes due to Localism

The Southwark experience

And then

..... any Views, Conclusions, or Questions?

National guidance & planning structures - what they do

There is a hierarchy to planning:

- **National Planning Policy**, set by Govt setting framework all other plans.
- **Strategic Local Plan**, by local authority on basis of National Policy and determining issues in any in Neighbourhood Plans.
- **Neighbourhood Plan**, by communities (if they want to) – must accord with National Policy & Strategic Local Plan.

NB *Neighbourhood Plans made possible by Localism Act 2011 (also got rid of Regional Planning Strategies).*

How London is different from the rest of the country

Except in London that is!!!

- Mayor responsible for a strategic London plan, and
- Local borough plans must accord with that.
- Outside London many parishes have developed neighbourhood plans: very few in London.

It is the sheer scale of London that makes this essential. Southwark's population is similar to Cardiff; whilst only 8 UK cities are larger than Barnet or Croydon!

Decision-making – where the power/accountability lies

Once a Plan exists

- Decisions on applications made by Planning Committees
- Typically at Local Plan level but also by Mayor/GLA on London specific issues.
- If Neighbourhood Plans exists - Parish Council Neighbourhood Forum comment on applications.
- But 90% decided under delegated powers.

Most systems allow...

- *"call-in" if minor issue causing concerns; and/or*
- *appeal against decisions.*

S106 T&CP Act 1990 and CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)

- Developers contribute community infrastructure benefits on all larger developments
- Compensation to community for building there
- Not just money, but also other direct benefits
- Appropriate to type, scale, value of development

Council draws up schedule of charges and list of benefits – and then asks community.

Localism Act 2011 - powers and rights : 4 main themes

1. New Powers for Local Authorities

2. Rights to individuals/communities - Including

- Right to Challenge - run local services.
- Right to Buy – assets of community value, etc.

3. Reforms to Planning Decisions - local people to decide about new homes/businesses

4. Reforms to Make Housing Decisions Local - who can apply for social housing, autonomy over funding, create more flexible conditions for social housing tenants.

NB No reform to Housing Revenue Account!!

Anticipated changes as a consequence

Local people

- More power - hold local auths to account
- Actively engagement in developments and decisions
- Lead in shaping neighbourhoods - Councillors engaging with & truly representing their area

A new strategy to be created to govern this relationship, and the new powers/rights local people have to be involved.

New Southwark Plan (to 2033)

5 versions

- *Planning Policy version (in 2015)*
- *Preferred Option (Mar 2016)*
- *Visions & Sites (Current Input by 27/4)*
- *Submission Version (Sept/Oct 2017)*
- *Finalised version – post public inspection*
- Consultation only via Council's own paths/networks
- Using 2008 Statement of Community Involvement
- Focus only on residents views (not communities, or networks, or groups)

Local residents have input to each version - But little evidence that these are taken on board!!

Current concerns across our communities

“That Planning & Redevelopment happens without real engagement – little ability to influence.”

Main issues across borough are:

- Housing - right type in the right place
- Affordability of housing - 35% targets achieved?
- Increasing loss of industrial land/workspace – when demand increasing.
- Sustainability – economic/social/ environmental

Also ... how S106/CIL money used – large amounts are proposed to be used from OKRd developments to contribute to new tube stations

Bad Press for the Council

- Local Govt Ombudsman report (Nov 2016)
 - Council couldn't monitoring affordable housing achieved
 - Developers building fewer affordable housing units than agreed
- Minister's ruling on Aylesbury Est leaseholders
- Evening Standard - International report about laundered money used in developments.

Not necessarily issues about Council, but about failings of whole planning process & market failings

Community Involvement - changes under VCS strategy

Common Purpose, Common Cause has people and their involvement at its heart – **the key**

- It embraces co-production – which Localism sought to encourage but has been missing in Southwark for 6 years now

- For planning specifically, it requires

“place based strategies to be community-led and developed through coproduction and co-design, to create better outcomes for residents”

In summary

Any questions?

Anything unclear?

Any initial views/thoughts?