



SADPD Site 18 Regulation 19 Submission from Norwood Forum

Norwood Forum writes to object to the submission of the SADPD to the Planning Inspectorate, and hopes that even at this late stage common sense will prevail and the decision-maker (whoever that is) will decide Site 18 should not be included in the SADPD.

Norwood Forum is a volunteer-led organisation covering the south-east area of the London Borough of Lambeth: West Norwood, Gipsy Hill and Tulse Hill. We are a member of the Lambeth Forum Network and work hard to celebrate our wonderful neighbourhood and its vibrant, diverse, but cohesive community whilst making a positive difference to the quality of life for people who live and work here.

We are a member of our local West Norwood and Tulse Hill Community Stakeholder Group and wish to make it clear we are requesting the opportunity to make personal representation to the Inspector as part of that group.

Norwood Forum considers the current version of the SADPD to not meet the four tests of soundness set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and it to be flawed and not legally compliant because:

1. Sustainable development is not being proposed since the views of the local community were not sought before its preparation or in the light of the huge number of objections made to the 15 December 2021 Regulation 18 version. Council officers state they have relied on carrying out seemingly the absolute minimum consultation required under the regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Is there another authority in the land adopting an SADPD which has not held any face to face public outreach (not even an exhibition) but relied on community groups to act as a conduit? Community groups do not have the Council's resources to develop comprehensive ideas and seek a consensus. In our experience, local authorities engage in informal consultation through a suite of measures before proceeding to statutory consultation.
2. The failure to involve the public is compounded in the case of Site 18. The plans for Site 18 are not justified since no public assessment of the relationship of the existing 2017 Masterplan: Moving Forward: A Collaborative Approach to Delivery on which officers say it was based was undertaken and put before Cabinet on either 15 December 2021 or 15 January 2024 when agreeing the Regulation 18 and 19 versions of the document. The Master Plan was worked up in consultation between the Council and the local community, and the Council should have engaged with the community on proposals to update that. This would have created the opportunity for community buy-in to the SADPD. Given the development of the former 'Laundry' site and the agreement to remove the sites with significant residential from the policy (as we sought), some tweaking if not more substantial change was clearly necessary. Two years have been wasted through not engaging with the community. Why, when Lambeth have previously praised the: *'strength and willingness to engage of the West Norwood and Tulse Hill community that has been instrumental in delivering numerous successes for the area in recent years'*, have Lambeth not adequately delivered on public consultation, especially as this is a plan that will change forever the heart of our community? In the responses published on 8 March 2024 officers claim the 2017

Master Plan has been withdrawn, but omit to say by whom, when and under what authority, or explain why this was not publicised. In the same document officers also belatedly claim its findings informed the SADPD but offer no proof; the reality is there is no reference at all to the Master Plan in any of their SADPD reports. Cabinet was therefore misled at both meetings through not having access to this planning history on Site 18 and necessary knowledge of a position agreed between the Council and community. Furthermore, it was not given the opportunity to test the SADPD proposals against the agreed Master Plan 2017.

3. The decision-making process itself was flawed as Wards affected should have been listed to meet the legal and constitutional requirements of the statutory Forward Plan process. The Forward Plan entry (apparently first made in December 2020) for the 15 December 2021 Cabinet key decision specified “All wards” rather than the wards where the specific sites were sited. So for instance, the Council did not ensure that residents of Knight’s Hill ward were notified of the important key decision to be taken about their town centre: possible large-scale demolition and redevelopment. This was compounded by the opaque title used for the Forward Plan entry, and the failure to publish a proper list of background documents: no reference was made to the previous key decisions taken: West Norwood Town Centre Master Plan 2009 (Lambeth Council/EDAW), the A Plan for West Norwood and Tulse Hill: Community Evidence Base Report 2016 (Lambeth Council/Regeneris), and the West Norwood and Tulse Hill: A Manual for Delivery 2017 (Lambeth Council/Regeneris). The officer response published on 8 March 2024 does not address the point we made at Regulation 18 that the SADPD is not a general all borough covering policy document but a site specific set of proposals. The officers double-downed on this legal failure by following a similar flawed notification process for the 15 January 2024 key decision.
4. We also remain of the view that the requirements on Regulation 18 consultation were not met. There was no pre-notification to local communities about the proposals or indeed to the Lambeth Forum Network of which Norwood Forum is a member. Cabinet met and approved the SADPD for public consultation on 13 December 2021. It then took until 6 January 2022 to notify Norwood stakeholders and offer (them only) an online briefing. This was held on the earliest possible date offered by the Council of 24 January 2022. Lambeth states its Regulation 18 consultation commenced on 10 January 2022 and ran until 11pm on 22 February 2022. The stakeholder group, made up entirely of volunteers, was therefore given less than four weeks to activate the community and respond following this briefing. Despite this our community responded by submitting over 3000 objections – 84.2% of all comments made on all the SADPD sites. The officer response published on 8 March 2024 did not adequately address this issue.
5. Officers failed to publish with the Cabinet agenda (15 January 2024) the responses received under Regulation 18. Instead they published a short summary (Appendix 3). This meant Cabinet was not given the opportunity to consider the actual representations made and weigh them up against the responses of officers. Furthermore, Cabinet was misled as the officer summary states for Site 18 “Significant local opposition to principle and scale of development” whereas in fact the community had agreed to the principle of residential development as this was integral to the 2017 Master Plan and predecessors. Norwood Forum and other stakeholders made it plain in their representations that the community did not want a blighted site to remain behind the high street – a position which the Council has failed to address adequately over the decades.

6. Our understanding is the Council is required to provide a response to all points made under the Regulation 18 process. We have read the responses provided to our extensive representations and do not consider some to be adequate as the reasons for the officer viewpoint are often not given. Moreover no responses at all were provided to our representations at sections 6 - 9 (pages 6-13), and we were not contacted to explain why or how our comments were being incorporated or why they were being rejected.
7. Cabinet (15 January 2024) has been potentially misled by comments in para. 2.27. It is not true to state there was engagement with the local community; there was none. There was instead three of "stakeholder engagement meetings" on Sites 18 & 19 with a limited number of invitees by officers. No attempt was made by the Council to convince the 1,300 objectors that the Council's proposals were correct. Also, whilst much existing housing within the original Site 18 boundaries at Regulation 18 has been removed, some has not and this is not spelt out in the paragraph.
At that Cabinet meeting on 15 January, the cabinet member was asked if the Council would engage in public consultation on the Regulation 19 proposals and it was understood that he committed the Council to that. In the event the Council actually proceeded with just one briefing session with the small Stakeholder group.
8. The January 2024 version does not address the fundamental objection that regeneration will likely mean the demise of our existing mix of independent and small chain shops and other local businesses on Norwood Road. There is a complete lack of recognition of the vital contribution our local businesses make to our 15min neighbourhood. They stood by the community during Covid, and our high street thrives because of its unique make-up. We have all witnessed what happens to small businesses when redevelopment occurs:
 - Existing businesses have to close - where do they go, how do they survive?
 - Redevelopment takes years with all that entails
 - The former businesses cannot afford to return, units remain empty, and any that are filled are filled with national chains.

Officers have failed to address this fundamental issue. No protection whatsoever has been offered for our local businesses. They state this is an issue that can only be addressed under any planning application that is submitted, but we want the Council to address this in the SADPD. Moreover, the Council owns the freehold of the B&Q site and should be presenting plans to protect this crucial anchor store which is vital to the continuing success of the town centre.

9. Cabinet (15 January 2024) was advised in para. 2.28 that Site 19 had been withdrawn from the SADPD but the possible next steps by Council were not flagged. We believe the Council should be working now with the community to confirm the future of this site and not standing back and waiting until a planning application is submitted. This is of no help to the community, the businesses successfully operating at the site nor indeed the landowner and would be developers
10. Cabinet (15 January 2024) was not provided with TVIA images of the impact of the tower blocks on site 18. These were only published on 8 March 2024 (Appendix 1 Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Views Analysis). We disagree with the subjective commentary accompanying the TVIA images, but this visual evidence should have been presented to Cabinet in making its decisions; Cabinet was not fully informed. It is regrettable too, in the light of views submitted at Regulation 18 consultation, that officers did not use the opportunity of the "stakeholder engagement meetings" to seek agreement to the TVIA image local views to be used to show the impact of the mooted development.

11. The SADPD fails to give sufficient regard to the damage to our local heritage. The current policy for Site 18 states: *'development should respect the rich conservation value and heritage of the town centre, taking account of factors such as building heights ... avoiding a canyon effect'* (Taken from the current Local Plan). The SADPD Site 18 proposal is clearly a step backward as it means:
 - Totally out of scale buildings and a radical redesign of the heart of our town - without any community involvement
 - Overshadowing and domination of the neighbouring properties – the clear creation rather than avoidance of the prescribed canyon effect. This will degrade existing local heritage buildings; for instance the fine parade on the eastern side of Norwood Road: 'The Broadway' from Lancaster Avenue to Chatsworth Way
 - Damage to the setting of St Luke's Grade II* listed church, the existing and mooted extension to [West Norwood Conservation Area](#) and West Norwood Cemetery (one of the Magnificent Seven) - all important heritage assets.
12. The viability assessment dated June 2023 but only published on 8 March 2024 should also have been published with the Cabinet agenda to aid the Cabinet in its decision-making. Again therefore the decisions taken by Cabinet are flawed as Cabinet was not fully informed.
13. Furthermore the Viability Assessment casts extreme doubt over the viability of Site 18. At Table 5.2.1: appraisal results shows a deficit of £46.16m for SA18 (site18). Para. 5.5 states: "SA18 generates a relatively low residual land values (£5.80 million) which is significantly lower than the Site's benchmark land value of £51.96 million. This site contains an extensive number of properties, including residential units. Given the low value generated in relation to the benchmark land value, this scheme would require significant growth in values to become viable". We fear this means it is very unlikely much (if any) affordable housing will be provided by any developer during the lifespan of the SADPD. It would therefore be more sensible for the Council to delete Site 18 and facilitate development of individual parcels of land or contiguous parcels (notably B&Q and the industrial area to the north which is all owned by Lambeth) -as is already happening on the former Laundry site. There could also be encouragement of modest extensions to the existing buildings on Norwood Road and conversion/upgrade of upper floors to residential as is already taking place on both sides of the Lansdowne Hill junction with Norwood Road, to the south of Site 18 as now drawn but formerly within it. There is a real opportunity to work with the community be they residents or businesses and with land owners and developers to provide development that meets the principles we set out in our original representations under Regulation 18. These findings should clearly have been presented to Cabinet for consideration as part of its decision-making.
14. Finally we dispute the Council's claim that proceeding with the Regulation 19 consultation during the pre-election/election period was acceptable. Regardless of the advice they received from Council's Monitoring Officer to the contrary, we suggest at the very least, this was morally wrong, not least because the key Cabinet Member Cllr Adilypour who had been personally involved throughout the process was unable to participate and, though local councillors had been given special dispensation to be involved, with the by-election called in the Knight's Hill ward within which Site 18 is located, none attended the briefing.
 - Government [Consultation Principles](#) specifically state that: *'Consultation exercises should not generally be launched during local or national election periods'*.

- [local.gov.uk](https://www.local.gov.uk) also states that:
'Consultations should be considered very carefully during the pre-election period as it is a period of heightened sensitivity'.

We received no explanation as to why the Regulation 19 process had to be rushed through, after some two years had passed following the Regulation 18 consultation. We suggested the only fair and transparent way forward was for the Regulation 19 consultation period to be extended by at least 7 weeks to mitigate the impact of the pre-election period.

- This will enable planning for the fuller engagement as has been promised.
- Plus enable the proper participation of Cllr Adilypour and local ward councillors.

A positive way forward in collaboration

In conclusion, for all the above reasons, we still call for Site 18 to be removed from the SADPD policy document. We remain pro-development, especially recognising the desperate need for genuinely affordable housing, but as we said as far back as December 2022, we want:

Consultation and engagement with the wider community by Lambeth Council; working in partnership to develop a holistic vision for the whole of West Norwood and Tulse Hill, including Sites 18 & 19.

The community really does want to be part of the solution going forward; to deliver a plan that achieves Council objectives but also fulfils the aspirations of our thriving community of residents and businesses.

Kim Hart
Chair, Norwood Forum
01 May 2024