Station to Station BID

Response to Lambeth’s SADPD - sites 18 & 19

We have been given just 6 weeks to consult on two huge schemes, Site 18 & 19, which will have an enormous impact on the heart of our high street and the area as a whole.

We as a community know that Lambeth needs to build more homes and that the West Norwood sites could potentially house hundreds of families. This could be a very good thing for the area’s businesses. However, it could also potentially mean that developers buy up the shops and close existing businesses while they rebuild/renovate their premises with new flats on top. We have seen negative precedents locally for this with the development of Network Rail /Arch Co premises in both Herne Hill and Brixton, with extremely lengthy building works that result in the closure of much loved independent businesses and long term vacancies in the very core of these town centres.

Below are some of the concerns that West Norwood & Tulse Hill businesses would like us as their business improvement district to raise on their collective behalves.

* Consultation time – 6 weeks is not long enough for such a big development that will have such far reaching effects on the business community
* Size of high street frontage development – how could it happen, the entire street? block by block? or building by building? The area would obviously favour a ‘piecemeal’ approach as this would reduce disruption to the heart of the town centre
* Business rates relief / compensation – would business disruption payments be available to a) businesses directly affected by premises demolition/renovation and b) to the nearby business community for the impact of anchor shops closing, traffic, building works, noise, pollution (as was the case with Thames Water roadworks)
* Compulsory purchase orders – will Lambeth use these to buy properties that landlords don’t want to sell?
* Access – would the building work behind the high street effect traffic/parking on Norwood Road and side streets? What provision is being made for vehicles in the new housing developments?
* Reduction of light industrial workspace – we are seeing across the capital encroachment of residential developers on key industrial space, there is a huge demand locally for ‘messy, dirty, smelly’ spaces (mechanics, artists, makers, joiners, industrial kitchens etc) and we would not like to see this removed from either site 18 & 19.
* Directly affected retailers – would they have ‘first refusal’ on new units if their existing ones are demolished/renovated?
* Timelines – how long could the disruption last? Would developers be held to account if works went over agreed schedules?
* Affordable rents – would independent businesses be priced out by multinational chains when the new units open?
* Affordable housing – will the new residences on Site 18/19 be ‘affordable’ or market rate?
* Environmental impact – how does the demolition of buildings fit with Lambeth policy on the Climate Emergency?

In the light of all these legitimate business concerns, we would ask that both site 18 & 19 be removed from the SAPDP to enable proper grass roots consultation.

Development of these sites is necessary and would be beneficial to the area, but it needs to happen with the consent of those who will be most affected by it - the business and residential community.