

planning aid for london comments

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Planning Aid for London: response to Consultation on the draft London Plan

Planning Aid for London is responding to the GLA consultation in respect of the London Plan. As an organisation our concerns are that communities and individuals in London have the opportunity to engage in the consultation process, are able to make meaningful responses and that their concerns and issues are given adequate attention.

Planning Aid for London acknowledges the consultation with London's many communities that has been carried out by the GLA. A key goal of PAL is that everyone has the opportunity to engage with policy and plan making in the capital. As well as the local plan consultations, we note that there are many ongoing opportunities for individuals and communities to make their views known. Such engagement is critical if greater understanding and recognition of the issues around planning in London is to be achieved. We need to move away from confrontational and contested processes where decisions are delayed to the detriment of London. We need to build a consensus where opposing views are respected and accommodated.

PAL does have concerns about the capacity of London's communities and individuals to fully engage in consultation opportunities. There are the hard to reach groups, where language, culture, extreme age or youth or disability form barriers to engagement. Consultation with these groups requires specifically tailored approaches at least initially. PAL would like to see support given to the identification and dissemination of good practice techniques in relation to such groups.

Our experience in working with communities and individuals is that many are unfamiliar with the planning system and require some basic education before they can address the issues. Consultation does not always provide this. Such lack of capacity can also extend the period before a response is given. PAL would therefore like to see greater support for appropriate education programmes.

We believe that that communities should remain engaged in policy development as well as subsequent development management and receive monitoring information. PAL would therefore like the GLA/boroughs to consider how such ongoing engagement can be achieved. Although there is a risk of consultation fatigue, perhaps a standing forum for community engagement could form part of future GLA London Plan activity?