

Consultation Statement: RBKC Community Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), June 2020

Regulation 12 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

The Council has prepared a RBKC Community Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) providing guidance on *affordable* housing. In accordance with Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), this Consultation Statement sets out:

Regulation 12 (a) (i) the persons the local planning authority consulted when preparing the supplementary planning document

The Council engaged with key residents' associations before the Draft SPD was published for consultation.

The Council undertook a six-week consultation on the Draft Affordable Housing SPD from 11 February to 24 March 2020.

The following consultation procedure was followed:

The Local Planning Authority has a Planning Policy consultation database which has about 2,500 consultees. A mail out was sent to all consultees on the Planning Policy database by email and post notifying them of the consultation and inviting comments. The documents were also available on-line under 'current consultations' on the planning pages of the Council's website and were open to anyone for comment. Documents were made available in all local libraries in the Borough for reference and hard copies were also available in Kensington Town Hall.

The Planning Policy database includes 'general', 'specific', 'prescribed' and 'local' consultation bodies as required by legislation. The 'general consultation' bodies include voluntary bodies such as Kensington Society, Chelsea Society and Tenants and Residents Associations, bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups such as London Gypsy and Traveller Unit, bodies representing religious groups such as Christ Church Kensington, bodies representing the interests of disabled persons such as Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea and bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying out business in the Royal Borough such as KC Chamber of Commerce.

The 'specific' and 'prescribed' consultation bodies consulted included the Environment Agency; Natural England, Historic England, the Highways Agency, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Thames Water and the Mayor of London (GLA).

The 'local' consultation bodies consulted included individual residents and persons carrying on business in the Royal Borough who signed up to the above database or visited the specific pages of the Council's website.

In addition to the Council's website, in accordance with Regulation 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the documents were also made available for inspection during normal office hours at Kensington Town Hall and at local libraries in the borough.

Alongside consulting through the Planning Policy database, the Council ran a poll on the term to be used for *affordable* housing using the digital platform built-id. This enables publicity of the consultation to a very wide audience using adverts on social media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Google to invite users to participate in polls.

Regulation 12 (a) (ii) a summary of the main issues raised by those persons

A summary of the consultation responses by both these means is set out below.

Digital Consultation (Built-ID)

The consultation on the Draft Affordable Housing SPD ran concurrently with Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) Priorities consultation. These consultations reached¹ a phenomenal 273,200 people in the Borough. The adverts resulted in about 6,300 people clicking to land on the consultation page via the digital platform. The adverts for the consultation were shown 2,816,213 times by facebook. A full analysis is available on the Council's website.

The Built-ID social media campaign was invaluable in that it was able to attract a number of stakeholders whom we would be unlikely to engage through the conventional channels. It would appear that these stakeholders are different from those who responded though the Council's usual planning consultation portal/mailout described in the next section.

A single question "Which of these terms would best describe truly affordable housing in RBKC?" was being polled through this method. There were 244 voters as follows:

¹ People who saw the adverts on social media

1	RBKC Community Housing	95 (39%)
2	RBKC Fair Homes	88 (36%)
3	RBKC Public Housing	61 (25%)

Participants could also suggest their own term or provide other comments. In addition to the vote, 81 comments were received which are available to view on the Council's website.

In summary, thirty-three of these comments were directly related to the term that should be used. In most cases these comments offered some further explanation as to why one of the three suggested terms was favoured. However, a small number of alternative terms were also put forward. These included: "council housing", "council assisted accommodation", "fair deal housing", "fair rent housing", "subsidised housing", "housing for all", "middle income housing", "low income housing", "primary housing" and "government housing." The majority of these terms had just a single proponent. None had more than a couple of votes.

Four stakeholders were of the view that the existing term "affordable housing" remained appropriate and did not need changing.

Sixteen comments were made which related to definition of affordable housing, with a number offering their own definitions. There was no single view.

Nine stakeholders supported the provision of affordable homes but were concerned that it should also cater for those on middle incomes and not just those in greatest need. This included, for example, the need for "intermediate housing", for key worker housing, or housing available at 80% market rent.

Twelve comments were received which critiqued the Council's approach to affordable housing and to the SPD. For example concern was raised about unscrupulous developers putting affordable housing away from the development. Another raised concerns about the Mayor of London overriding the Council for his own personal agenda. Another questioned whether an independent flat was suitable for all, particularly those with mental health issues.

The majority of responses were concerned that affordable housing must be truly affordable and suggested ways that more could be provided or the ways that the housing that is provided could be managed or allocated.

Responses via email/planning consultation portal

Fifteen responses were received through the traditional consultation method via email or through the on-line response form. Detailed responses are can be viewed on the Council's website.

Three responses supporting RBKC Fair Homes were received but this does not change the overall results from the built-id polls although this does narrow the gap even more. Other suggestions such as subsidised housing or social homes were also made.

A very supportive response from the Mayor of London was received.

Two residents' associations – Kensington Society and Chelsea Society have written in support. Two housing associations – Octavia and Clarion have also written in support. Four government bodies/ statutory consultees have written to confirm they have no substantive comments.

Objections

The key issue raised in the objections was the change to 70% social rent and 30% intermediate). These were mainly from a councillor and on behalf of the landowners/developers for the two opportunity are sites in the Borough – Kensal Canalside and Earl's Court.

There were responses from two councillors, one of whom was not supportive of the approach taken by the SPD in increasing the requirement for social rent housing. An alternative mix was proposed reducing it to 25% social/affordable rent, 25% extra care or sheltered for elderly and 50% Intermediate joint ownership (part rent/part buy).

Responses were received on behalf of the landowners/developers for the two opportunity are sites in the Borough – Kensal Canalside and Earl's Court. Whilst supportive of the general intent of the document, these raised concerns about the change to 70% social rent and 30% intermediate as set out in the SPD. They highlighted that an SPD is not the place to include new policies and that this should be done through the Local Plan process. They questioned the legal basis, conflict with the Local Plan and the evidence. They pointed out that the changes proposed will impact negatively on the viability of their schemes. However, ultimately, they wished to see a clear reference in the SPD that a site-specific viability taking into account the specific constraints/issues for their sites, will be taken into account in any future planning decision.

Regulation 12 a (iii) how those issues have been addressed in the supplementary planning document

A detailed consultation schedule explaining how these issues have been addressed is available on the Council's website.

In summary, there were a number of supportive comments which did not result in any substantive change to the Draft SPD. The objections raised in relation to changing the tenure mix of affordable housing to a different mix with a low proportion of social rent was not supported by any evidence. Therefore, this could not be taken any further.

The comments made by the landowners were considered to be largely covered by the Draft SPD already as it did not preclude site specific viability considerations. However, an explicit sub-section titled Opportunity Areas has been added to the SPD (see section 5 of the SPD) to add clarity.