

8.2 Housing

Key issues

- Due both to lack of security of tenure and a lack of different types of housing stock, many find it hard to stay in Waterloo if they have to downsize or upgrade due to shifts in the size of the family. This affects those in private and social housing and leads to a variety of problems, including overcrowding and loss of social cohesion.
- Affordable housing delivered through development is unlikely to be affordable for most. There is a need to accommodate those on low to middle incomes who work in local sectors that need employees to live close to where they work.
- The area would benefit from additional residents, but too much residential development is not permanently lived in.

Consultation and Evidence

Summary of results of consultation and evidence for Policies P7; Housing is at Appendix 2, page 45.

Policy P7 : Housing

No	Policies
P7	Where, in exceptional circumstances, affordable housing cannot be delivered on site, consideration should be given to making land in the neighbourhood area available to a local designated Community Land Trust to bring forward affordable housing in partnership with a registered housing provider.

Rationale for policy

Policy P7 – A wealth of experience in delivering housing is to be found in the neighbourhood area. Coin Street Community Builders and other coops, housing associations and housing trusts are based in the area and able to deliver housing which best meets local need. SoWN believes that the ethos represented by Coin Street Community Builders should be replicated across other projects, giving local people the power to determine where new homes should be developed and where housing need is most critical.

Mixed use schemes which develop employment opportunities for occupants of the homes are particularly encouraged, to reduce the reliance on public transport for people to get to work, and provide a link between the services that are provided locally and the people who live in the neighbourhood. A community run social enterprise laundrette is a particular aspiration of members of the community.

Housing : Other guidance

1. Residential development should provide high quality homes which are designed to encourage well-maintained permanent use. Housing should not be developed as a liquid asset but to provide mitigation of the UK housing shortage. Housing developments should be marketed to prospective buyers in the UK before they are marketed overseas.
2. SoWN seeks a community solution to the shortage of affordable housing, aiming for a management structure which enables local ownership and oversight of housing. There should be more local control over housing (e.g. co-ops, community land trusts, neighbourhood housing agencies), with the ability to raise additional funding. Developments that create such arrangements will be welcomed by the community.
3. It is essential to encourage innovative new approaches to form, design and management which address local context and local need.
4. Although largely outside the role of the planning system, new approaches are needed to protect tenants in the private rented sector, including both incentives and penalties for landlords. Boroughs should support such measures as set out in the DCLG's Rogue Landlords discussion paper.⁴
5. Following the example of Westminster and Enfield, Lambeth and Southwark should also consider the purchase of properties in the area to house vulnerable people, reducing revenue costs in the long term.
6. A key issue among local people is the extent to which developers are able to meet the targets set by the local authority on affordable housing levels. These are justified on the basis of 'viability assessments' which can assert that development are not viable if they must provide the level of affordable housing the local authority requires. However, if viability assessments underestimate sales values and developments later make a larger profit than estimated, a mechanism should be developed which allows the council to 'claw back' funding retrospectively to deliver more affordable housing. These sums should fund affordable housing in the neighbourhood area where possible. The development proposals of charities and public bodies should be exempt from this obligation.

A number of councils, including Southwark and Lambeth are now producing Viability Assessment SPDs, which seek to address this issue and argue for the clawback mechanism, and that assessments justifying fewer affordable housing units should be open to public scrutiny. The neighbourhood forum supports the objectives of these SPDs.

7. The community believes that early consultation on major developments would enable them to provide helpful advice and reduce the likelihood of objections. To provide a mechanism to strengthen the Councils' commitment to 'front-loading' local consultation, a local 'development review panel' should be established to scrutinise major development plans at pre-planning stage, against their adherence to neighbourhood plan and other matters and make recommendation to the planning committee, including S106 mitigation and CIL spend. This would apply to applications undergoing pre-planning consultation and would be written into planning performance agreements. Plans would be submitted by the Councils to the panel with strict time limits on comments so as not to delay the planning process.

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/450862/Discussion_paper_FINAL.pdf

Appendix 2.

Summary of results of consultation and evidence for Policies P7 : Housing

South Bank and Waterloo, like the rest of central London, is subject to market forces that are drastically reducing the availability of housing. This was seen as inevitable by many respondents during the consultation and the power of the neighbourhood plan to address these regional issues was accepted as limited. However, local plans and neighbourhood plans are making attempts to develop policy in this area.

South Bank and Waterloo is unusual in comparison with most central London districts because the demographic is enduringly mixed. According to the ONS (2011) Census, 40% of the housing stock remains as social rented:

Tenure	Number
Owned	962
Social rented	1908
Private rented	1549

This includes a prevalence of co-operative and housing association housing in the neighbourhood, including the Coin Street Co-ops, Edward Henry Housing Co-op, New Cut Housing Co-op, Pearman Street Co-op, Peabody, Metropolitan Housing Trust and others. Security of tenure varies but has tended over time toward the less secure. For instance, the sale of Church Commissioners estate to Grainger in 2005/6 resulted in a move away from assured tenancies to assured shorthold tenancies or private sale.

If implemented, the extension of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants and the associated requirement for the disposal of Local Authorities' high value housing to fund the purchase discount is likely to affect Waterloo more deeply than elsewhere in Lambeth and Southwark. This will result in fewer Council or Housing Association homes, but co-op homes will not be affected by the change.

Some affordable housing will be delivered through new development, including at Lollard Street and Leake Street, in association with the Shell/Braeburn and Elizabeth House developments respectively. Extra care housing for the elderly will be provided on the Braeburn site, with a similar scheme earmarked for Gabriel's Wharf.

Sites such as the Guy's and St Thomas' Charity owned Royal Street and the Bourne Capital owned Triangle Site identified in Lambeth's Local Plan are also likely to include a significant housing element, including affordable housing.

In any case, local people, supported by evidence have raised concerns about the likely cost of affordable units where they are let at 80% of market level rents. According to Valuation Office figures cited in an article in **The Guardian** newspaper in February 2014,⁶ renting an affordable two bedroom flat in the Elephant and Castle would require a salary of £44,000, 30% higher than the London median average salary of £30,460.⁶

The affordability issue is more pronounced among certain groups that are increasingly under-represented in central London neighbourhoods such as South Bank & Waterloo. These include those who work in retail, hospitality and healthcare locally, where employers are finding recruitment and retention increasingly difficult where staff cannot afford to live within practical reach of their workplace.⁷

Also, the consultation showed that whilst not demographically underrepresented in the area, housing which is specifically designed for older people is needed. As the local population ages, there are few housing schemes which allow the elderly to remain in the community, and though two are planned, evidence suggests that there is likely to be a demand for further such accommodation.⁸ For the 'ambulant elderly', smaller flats in which to downsize are to be encouraged which both frees up family sized housing in the area and allows older people to remain connected to their community. Consultation evidence suggests that retirees are increasingly moving back to the city for its proximity to culture and healthcare, and the local economy would benefit from such residents.

The final group local people believe should have access to housing in the area is young professionals. In particular, and continuing the theme of cooperatives, housing which is designed to increase communality, particularly between young professionals and the elderly would be welcomed.

Although the methods for building housing to meet the needs of such groups are limited, the policy approaches below reflect the intentions of the neighbourhood plan in seeing a range of housing delivered. SoWN envisages a local role in the delivery and particularly the management of housing to meet the ambitions of the Plan.

⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2014/feb/03/affordable-housing-meaning-rent-social-housing>

⁷ 2012 Figures, ONS.

⁸ paragraph 4.2.1, page 67 refers to whether lower paid service sector will be sustainable in light of escalating housing costs, and paragraph 8.7 refers to assisting low-middle income households, not limited to key workers

⁹ Paragraph 4.1.1, page 62 and paragraph 8.2, page 97