

I am the chair of the Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Forum. The Forum was established in October 2013 and is well advanced in the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan for the Dartmouth Park area of LB Camden. This is a mainly residential neighbourhood with a population of just under 9,000, and the Forum has consulted widely with the residents about their desires and plans for the area.

We have seen the comments on the London Plan prepared by Neighbourhood Planners.London, and we fully endorse those comments. We would specifically draw your attention to the following points:

- Neighbourhood planning is now well established in London and warrants much more recognition for its role in helping deliver the London Plan's objectives than a few passing references in the draft.
- We agree with Neighbourhood Planners.London's assessment that the London Plan is unsound in failing to conform with the National Planning Policy Framework on the role and importance of neighbourhood plans.
- The Plan's objectives for "good growth" depend on effective and early community engagement in development choices. This should include an early opportunity for local residents and groups to have input into proposed developments *before* planning applications are submitted. All too often, all decisions on an application have effectively been taken by the developer in consultation with the local authority and (where relevant) a design review panel before there is any consultation with the public, and consultation is often only a tick box exercise. This undermines trust in the planning system and contributes to the feeling that residents have little control over the development of their neighbourhood.
- Stronger, better and earlier design input is critical to the successful delivery of the London Plan and neighbourhood planning can provide this. Our draft neighbourhood plan, for example, contains detailed principles on what constitutes good design, tailored to the particular circumstances of our neighbourhood.
- Challenging objectives to increase housing numbers will depend on securing community buy-in; this can be achieved through neighbourhood planning and effective engagement.
- Local knowledge applied through neighbourhood plans is particularly suited to identifying appropriate development sites.
- The London Plan needs to be clear which are the strategic policies with which neighbourhood plans have to be in general conformity.

Regards

Ellen Gates
Chair
Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Forum