

COMMENTS ON THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 17 Dec 2021

FRIENDS OF QUEENS MARKET

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This appears within our COMMENTS ON THE NEWHAM LOCAL PLAN 'REFRESH'

1. This year, we conducted a paper consultation as part of the digital consultation on the important Capacity and Viability Study for Queen's Market, because a lot of people found it hard to respond online. We submitted the paper results as part of the consultation.

We then found out that these results were effectively ignored by Newham's regeneration officers, who refused to publish the number of paper responses (438) within their Engagement Report. Instead they listed these responses separately and seemed to undermine many of them due to missing participant information (even though only an email address is needed for online responses). https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vpay_36n3Le9-TCTXY25T9bgIEM8tBNN/view As part of the Capacity and Viability Study report sent to Cabinet (7 December 2021) the figure of 438 again did not appear, and in paragraph 4.5 they wrote: *The conclusion drawn from the engagement exercise (see 3.2) was that there was **no overall preferred option** from the five we were considering.*

It is totally unacceptable that the additional information we gathered was discounted and that the Council's official summary of the issue is very different from what it would have been had those responses been counted: there was an overall preferred option, to retain the Market. It is the kind of action that makes people suspicious of the regeneration department's intentions.

Addition: the SCI should state that the Council must receive and take into account any and all viable data that contributes to their consultations.

2. Less than 50 people (it appears) took part in the previous SCI consultation - this is not enough and demonstrates the shortcomings of consultation in Newham. The Council has not found the right ways to enable effective consultation, judging from current consultations, which have very low response numbers.

3. The number of consultations happening at once should be urgently reduced. Over the past year, residents in the Green St area have had to deal with the following consultations: Good Growth; Capacity and Viability Study; High Streets; Characterisation Study; Local Plan; Creative Newham; Resident Participation Framework; Health and Wellbeing Residents' survey. It is impossible for people to take in each of these and respond effectively to each of them.

Addition: the SCI should set out rules for co-ordinating and streamlining different consultations.

4. Consultations should be prioritised on the co-create website. For example, the Local Plan, and other strategic issues that cover the whole of Newham, should be set apart from local consultations.
5. TIMING: Why does this consultation end on a Friday? It would be more sensible to give people an extra weekend to respond, given that the responses will not be looked at until Monday morning.
6. Our experience on the ground is that the Council does not try to engage properly with the people it needs to engage with, no matter what is written in the SCI.
7. The SCI is at best vague. Training is needed for officers who are going to be consulting the public so that they are able to gain full knowledge of what people want to say.
8. A mixture of digital and real-life consultation is needed, not one prioritised over another.

ENDS