

## 7.4.2 High quality design for Lewisham

**7.151** The Core Strategy policies relate to implementing:

- strategic objective 1 by contributing to regeneration and securing physical and socio-economic change
- strategic objective 10 by protecting and enhancing Lewisham's character
- strategic objective 11 by improving community well-being.

### Overview

**7.152** High quality, well-designed new development is a key factor that will contribute to the long-term sustainability of communities in Lewisham. In order to be successful new development must meet the qualities required by national and regional policy and guidance and also reflect and be sympathetic to the local physical and social characteristics of the borough.

**7.153** Lewisham has distinctive topographical characteristics, which will need to be considered as part of any development proposal. This was broadly outlined in the Spatial Strategy contained in Section 6 and has the following key characteristics:

- The Ravensbourne Valley passes from north to south through the borough surrounded by low hills topped with open spaces which provide a framework of local views and panoramas which will continue to be protected.
- The major town centres of Lewisham and Catford are located in this valley where major development is proposed.
- Lewisham Gateway is sited on the confluence of the rivers Ravensbourne and Quaggy, which should be enhanced in development proposals.
- The Sydenham Ridge forms the south-western boundary of the borough and is visible from within the borough. It forms a wooded skyline feature that the Council would wish to preserve.
- Most of the borough south of the A2 is suburban in character comprising well-integrated areas of mostly good quality residential development of varying styles, age and character.
- The borough north of the A2 (Deptford/New Cross) is flat and horizons are narrower and that, combined with a fragmented street network, means it is difficult to navigate.
- Large areas of the borough are designated as conservation areas and Areas of Archaeological Priority.
- A framework of local landmark buildings has been identified which add character and interest to the skyline of the borough.
- Two protected vistas of the dome of St Paul's Cathedral viewed from Greenwich Park and Blackheath Point pass across the north of the borough. These vistas are set within a London Panorama as viewed from Greenwich Park and Blackheath Point as defined in the View Management Framework of the London Plan. These Protected Vistas and the London Panorama act to manage the design and placement of tall buildings in the north of the borough to enhance the panorama and preserve the view of St Paul's.
- The River Thames provides the borough's northern boundary.

- 7.154** The Government, specifically through PPS1 and PPS3, has a strong focus on ensuring good quality design but does not specify particular styles except in special circumstances.<sup>(140)</sup> Design must lead to sustainable places.
- 7.155** PPS5 sets out the Government's planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment.<sup>(141)</sup> This provides for heritage assets and the national interpretation of the Town and Country Planning Acts for conservation areas, listed buildings, locally listed buildings and other local features such as boundary markers and water troughs, and archaeological remains.
- 7.156** The London Plan has policies on a range of design issues including compact city, density, tall buildings, strategic views, the River Thames and accessibility to buildings. We need to determine how we include a locally distinctive element to design while using existing national and regional policies already in existence.
- 7.157** It should be noted that sustainable design and construction and Lewisham's river and waterways network is dealt with in Section 7.3 of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy design policies cover the following areas:
- improving design for Lewisham
  - conserving Lewisham's historic environment
  - the location and design of tall buildings
  - protected vistas and the London panorama and local views, landmarks and panoramas.
- 7.158** The policies have been prepared in accordance with PPS1, PPS3, PPS5, are in conformity with the London Plan and evidenced through various local masterplans and urban design frameworks, and the Tall Buildings Study.

## Core Strategy Policy 15

### High quality design for Lewisham

1. For all development, the Council will:
  - a. apply national and regional policy and guidance to ensure highest quality design and the protection or enhancement of the historic and natural environment, which is sustainable, accessible to all, optimises the potential of sites and is sensitive to the local context and responds to local character
  - b. ensure design acts to reduce crime and the fear of crime
  - c. apply the housing densities as outlined in the London Plan, except where this is not appropriate to preserving or enhancing the characteristics of conservation areas
  - d. use Building for Life standards to assess major planning applications to ensure design quality in new housing schemes
  - e. ensure development is flexible and adaptable to change
  - f. ensure any development conserves and enhances the borough's heritage assets, and the significance of their settings, such as conservation areas, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, scheduled monuments and the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site.

140 PPS1, Sustainable development and PPS3, Housing

141 PPS5, Planning for the historic environment

## Core Strategy Policy 15

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2. The Spatial Strategy in Section 6 identifies the **Regeneration and Growth Areas, District Hubs, Activity Hubs, Local Hubs**, and **Areas of Stability and Managed Change** and describes their character. Within each strategy area the design of new development must meet various challenges, determined to a large extent by its context, size, purpose, and public transport accessibility. Specifically each strategy area will need to address.

### Regeneration and Growth Areas

3. Development should achieve the following design aims:
  - a. Achieve 'central' density levels within the Lewisham Major Town Centre.
  - b. Achieve 'urban' density levels in Catford Town Centre.
  - c. New developments in Lewisham and Catford town centres should result in a radical upgrading of the social and physical environment and, in order to be successful, will need to allow for tall buildings of the highest design quality where they improve and add coherence to the skyline, and do not cause harm to the surrounding environment, including the significance of heritage assets.
  - d. In the Deptford and New Cross area, urban design policy will aim to establish visual links with the Thames, increase the connectivity of the street network, improve the streetscape, and create a sense of place with radical improvements to the social and physical environment. Tall buildings may be appropriate in certain locations subject to Core Strategy Policy 18.
  - e. The New Cross/New Cross Gate Town Centre has a number of development opportunities which need to preserve and respect the character of the adjacent conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings.
  - f. Deptford Town Centre has development opportunities around the station and for the creation of new civic spaces and facilities. These should act to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, respect the continued functioning of the street market, and create a new sense of place and focus which will support and increase the vitality and viability of the centre.
  - g. Development within the Mixed Use Employment Locations (MELs) will need to create new places in areas that currently lack identity and will build on existing landscape features to preserve local distinctiveness.

### District Hubs

4. Development should achieve the following design aims to maximise the unique character and potential of each centre and improve accessibility and the overall environment with the highest quality design to ensure new development at:
  - a. Sydenham, Forest Hill, Lee Green and Blackheath preserves or enhances the historic character and significance, and that of the surrounding residential areas within a conservation area

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- b. Forest Hill improves pedestrian connections to the station, throughout the town centre and to the surrounding neighbourhoods with an improved streetscape and public realm
- c. Sydenham supports physical and environmental improvements to the High Street
- d. Lee Green improves the civic space and connections between sites with mixed use development.

#### Local Hubs

- 5. Development should achieve the following design aims:
  - a. New development at Brockley Cross and Hither Green should improve pedestrian environment and feelings of security particularly for the approaches to Hither Green and Brockley stations and enhance their local distinctiveness. Development should achieve an overall upgrade in the urban quality and general amenity.
  - b. New development at Bell Green should seek to achieve a better urban quality with high quality landscaping and a green landscaped link to the long distance foot and cycle path along the western boundary of the site.

#### Areas of Stability and Managed Change

- 6. Development should achieve the following design aims:
  - a. The scale and type of development will generally be smaller scale than other parts of the borough respecting conservation areas, listed buildings and the scale of surrounding residential character.
  - b. Small scale development, including infill development, will need to be designed and laid out to, complement the character of surrounding development, provide suitable residential accommodation with a high level of amenity and provide for garden and amenity space. Any adverse impact on neighbouring amenity, conservation areas and designated and non designated heritage assets, biodiversity or open space will need to be addressed.
  - c. Redevelopment opportunities near stations may provide scope for higher density redevelopment. The primary considerations will be accessibility to public transport, local character and urban design principles which aim to establish place making as part of any redevelopment.
  - d. Small household extensions and adaptations to existing housing will need to be designed to enhance the street scene, protect neighbour amenity and ensure that the living conditions proposed are satisfactory.
  - e. Conservation areas will be protected from inappropriate built development and change that enhances residential character will be considered acceptable.
  - f. Development should enhance the identity and distinctiveness of Downham District Centre.

The Southend Village, Bromley Road Supplementary Planning Document provides a coherent design framework that seeks to regenerate this area and will be used to guide development, while recognising that little remains of the old village centre.