



## Latin Elephant's Feedback to New Southwark Plan Options Consultation

By Patria Roman – Chair, Latin Elephant

**Latin Elephant** welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the New Southwark Plan.

Latin Elephant is a Charity working with the community of Latin American retailers in Elephant and Castle. As a charity we aim to promote the inclusion of Latin Americans in regeneration initiatives across London. We do this by influencing infrastructure, increasing awareness and use of public spaces where Latin Americans are often underrepresented, and encouraging inter and intra-community integration.

Latin Elephant advocates for a more inclusive understanding of urban policy in London and as such we promote the contribution that migrant and ethnic communities make to London's diverse economies and cultures. Latin Elephant's policy recommendation to the London Plan on the importance of migrant and ethnic economies was acknowledged and adopted in the Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP2014 - details below).

The feedback to NSP includes reasoned justifications for supporting migrant and ethnic retail in Southwark and why we deemed this to be an important component for inclusion in the New Southwark Plan. We also offer recommendations and feedback to specific policies on 'business, employment and enterprise' and 'Town Centres' by drawing on our recent consultation and work with retailers and community groups in the area. We hope to see these points addressed and taken into consideration when reviewing the proposed Plan for Southwark.

### GENERAL INCLUSION ON SUPPORT OF MIGRANT AND ETHNIC ECONOMIES IN NSP

Latin Elephant would welcome a section in the NSP that acknowledges and expresses its support and intention to protect Southwark's existing migrant and ethnic economies. This is particularly relevant if considering that Southwark's migrant and ethnic population accounts for up to 60%. Latin Americans account for approximately 10% of Southwark's population according to the 2011 Census. Also, a high proportion of the shops at Elephant and Castle, Walworth Road, Old Kent Road are or cater to Southwark's migrant and ethnic population.

Supporting specialist ethnic and migrant retail is relevant for regeneration schemes across London and a pertinent policy aspect which we outlined in our response to FALP2014 (see references below). To sum up:

- Ethnic minority businesses contributed to an estimated £25 - £32 billion to the UK economy annually (Regeneris 2010).

- Service provision and access to government advice for EMBs is not reaching all (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2013)
- More needs to be done to make sure people from all backgrounds can achieve their aspirations of starting up a business (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2013).
- Failure to encourage business start-ups by ethnic minorities in the UK is costing the UK economy approximately £8 billion annually.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATION ON NSP (Recommendations are highlighted in green)

### **Chapter 3: Revitalised Neighbourhoods – Elephant and Castle section**

The description of Elephant and Castle’s ‘positive and distinctive character’ should include a point that stresses the importance of existing business clusters, such as the Latin Quarter. For example, our research found out that there are 80 Latin American businesses in the EC area, each employing on average between 1-5 people, and attracting large number of visitors and customers to the area.

We recommend adding the following points (to be in line with the description for Walworth Road):

**We will continue to support the local economy and protect and promote the local migrant and ethnic economies of Elephant and Castle during and after the regeneration programme.**

**We will continue to support the ethnic and cultural diversity of Elephant & Castle during and after the regeneration programme.**

### **Strategic Policy 5: Maintaining and enhancing the local economy**

We welcome this policy, however we feel that the policy does not mention how existing businesses contribute to a strong local economy and to future development. To address this point we suggest the following changes:

‘The local economy will be strengthened by **protecting existing businesses and providing them opportunities to grow**, and through development that provides new jobs and which creates an environment where businesses, including small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), can thrive. Southwark will be a place where local people and businesses benefit from opportunities generated by development, **through active engagement in new proposed schemes and opportunities to contribute to their delivery through local supply chains.**’

## **DM22: Railway arches (outside the Preferred Industrial Locations)**

We feel that this policy should recognize the importance of existing business clusters in railway arches such as Latin Quarter. We recommend the addition of a new paragraph to address this point:

**DM 22.4 Well established business clusters in railway arches will be protected and enhanced where necessary through walking and cycling routes, shop front and public space improvements.**

## **DM23: Small business units**

We feel that this policy does not protect existing small businesses affected by regeneration programmes at Elephant and Castle, particularly those which are threatened by regeneration as a direct result of being in a designated Opportunity Area (and thus needing to relocate due to re-development of existing sites and buildings). It is not clear that small businesses in Central Activity Zones, Opportunity Areas, Core Action Areas, Town and Local Centres, Strategic Cultural Areas, Camberwell Action Area will be protected. To that effect we would suggest adding the following text to DM23 policy text:

‘Southwark will protect and encourage business and commercial floor space to meet the needs of small and medium sized enterprises **in Central Activity Zones, Opportunity Areas, Core Action Areas, Town and Local Centres, Strategic Cultural Areas, Camberwell Action Area.**’

We would also like to recommend adding the following point or one with similar wording:

**DM23.3 Proposals for redevelopment of commercial buildings and spaces should allow current tenants the first choice to bid or tender for business units in the new developments. The bidding process should be open to current tenants and existing local independent businesses for the first 18 months after which period an open call could take place.**

To protect small business units and in response to Key Question 13 in the NSP Options version regarding affordable business space we would **welcome a statement that sets levels of rent value as affordable and quantity of affordable space in relation to the size development site.** The wording for rent value could be similar to what is currently approved in Southwark’s Supplementary Planning Document: ‘40% below market rate averaged over a 5 year period’. The **wording for quantity of affordable space could follow similar wording to that in policy DM24.1 – 24.3**

## **DM24: Access to employment and training**

Latin Elephant welcomes this policy, and we would like to highlight other areas of employment and training outside of the construction sector. Our experience with Latin

American retailers at Elephant and Castle highlights the needs and aspirations of existing business to be sustainable and capable of growing alongside the regeneration projects scheduled in Elephant and Castle. Regeneration offers opportunity for growth and with the right mechanisms in place existing migrant and ethnic economies and small and micro enterprises in the area can continue to thrive and contribute to the area's economic growth, vibrancy and cultural diversity.

Drawing on our experience with Latin American retailers at Elephant and Castle we would like to highlight areas of need for existing small businesses which we would like to see address in this policy:

**Business support and access to finance for migrant and ethnic businesses** - In London most business start-ups are from ethnic minorities, yet it is this group the one that is missing out on opportunities for growth and access to finance.

**Services to business could be part of a holistic training package or programme for existing businesses wishing to grow and expand and for start-ups.** This should include language support, capacity building, one to one business development sessions, employment law, training and access to finance.

#### **DM25: Town centres and important shopping parades | DM26: Local shopping parades and small shops**

In response to key question 16 - Latin Elephant would like to see further development, improvement and investment in the Latin Quarter at Elephant and Castle. Investment in enhancing the identity, character and public realm around the quarter is welcomed and needed to attract more visitors to the Elephant and realise the economic potential of the Latin Quarter.

In response to key question 17 – **Elephant and Castle's Latin Quarter should be included in the list of protected shopping parades** as it fits the definition of shopping parades. . **In particular along the railway arches in Elephant Road and Eagles Yard.** Our research has proven that the Latin Quarter is an important economic business cluster in the area that is highly valued by local residents and visitors alike. These businesses make the area feel safer, vibrant and has made of the Elephant a better place to live, work and visit.

Multi-shopping centres, small units within larger premises is a popular business model developed by many small local businesses in the borough. This can be seen along along the Arches in Elephant Road and Eagles Yard, and in New Kent Road and Old Kent Road. This model developed as a strategy to deal with rising rent and business rates cost and has the potential to act as a start-up incubator for EMBs and generally an attractive model to small business. These units can often accommodate a variety of uses which is very valuable to customers and aspiring entrepreneurs. We feel that this **modular business model (usually within larger premises) should be encouraged and supported through planning processes.**

## **Strategic Policy 8: Encouraging flexible community uses**

Latin Elephant welcomes this policy and recommends adding to better describe the diversity of sectors that could benefit from such developments:

‘Opportunities for community activities will be increased by encouraging accessible development that is capable of being used by community groups, **charities and other support organisations**. Facilities will be located and designed in such a way as to complement and support different groups.’

Latin Elephant welcomes this policy and would like to see a stronger commitment by including a clause about the **affordability of such spaces**.

## **DM42: Local character**

We feel that this policy should make a direct reference to the ethnic and cultural character of areas. Places are more than just buildings, architecture and materials. Local character should be wider than physical characteristics to include ethnic and cultural character.

‘Southwark’s places will **continue to** have unique local, **ethnic and cultural** characters. This will ensure that the neighbourhoods and areas that benefit from a positive local character and have a distinct sense of place are well managed, and places with poor or mixed character are improved.’

## **DM43: Public realm | DM44: Public art | DM47: Shop fronts**

Latin Elephant welcomes these policies as many of these features were identified in our recent consultation with Latin American retailers. The results of this consultation has been published as a report: *Latin Quarter: Elephant & Castle Community Vision* - <http://latinelephant.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Draft-report-Jan-2015.pdf>

## **MIGRANT AND ETHNIC ECONOMIES IN FALP2014**

Latin Elephant made an important intervention and policy recommendation about the disconnect between urban policy and migrant and ethnic economies in the London Plan in the recent FALP2014. One of our policy recommendation (adding point vii to policy 4.8.g) was adopted as a result of the evidence we presented:

[https://latinelephant.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/eip\\_presentation\\_le\\_2014\\_09\\_11\\_final1.pdf](https://latinelephant.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/eip_presentation_le_2014_09_11_final1.pdf)

Change in London Plan (page 147 policy 4.8.g.vii):

<https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/FALP%20ITP%20changes%2015%20December%202014.pdf>