

MBA Construction and Real Estate

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Title: An Investigation into Apparent Gaps between Policy and Practice in Development Management: A Central London Case Study

Hypothesis: During 2014-2018, amalgamation policies in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea were not clear to the public.

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Abstract

Amalgamation in the context of this report refers to the act of combining two or more residential units into one unit. The literature review analysed the planning system in England and how local plans are adopted. It uncovered issues, such as, the planning system does not align with the political system, housing targets are proving controversial, and local plan adoption is taking too long; in part, due to the lengthy process involved and the time taken by the Planning Inspectorate to approve them. It also found the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) was struggling to keep up with housing targets set in the London Plan, which led it to question the structure its amalgamation policies should take.

Two case studies analysed how the timeline of publications relating to amalgamation in RBKC influenced the clarity of communication between RBKC and the public. A questionnaire then provided professional opinion on the issues raised. The research investigated RBKC exclusively, which generated a small sample of questionnaire respondents.

The data received was coded and triangulated, and led to potential solutions being proposed for:

- Aligning the political terms of office, national planning guidance and local planning guidance.
- Reforming the role of the Planning Inspectorate.
- Updating local plans instantly, without changing the adopted text, using hyperlinks on web-based local plans.

The hypothesis was accepted based on the evidence provided by the literature review, case studies and the questionnaire.

The topic was pursued because the author experienced challenges on a project dealing with amalgamation planning policies in RBKC. His position within an architect's office provided access to information on relevant case studies and various professional contacts to seek their experienced opinions. Unclear communication of planning policies wastes time and money for all stakeholders, so the author wanted to attain a deeper understanding of how planning policies are adopted and why they sometimes conflict with each other.