



Lendlease responds to Fifth Estate story

Large-scale, inner-city regeneration is always challenging and even the best efforts to achieve the right outcomes environmentally, socially and economically will not please all of the people, all of the time.

Lendlease takes its responsibilities, its commitments and sustainability extremely seriously. When embarking on a project that will take 10-15 years or more to implement, it can be very difficult to be certain about the right technical solutions from the outset, and it's impossible to know how local people will respond when, for example, you consult them about the best place to plant new street trees. What's important is that the commitments are kept, even if the solutions need to adapt.

We're approaching the half-way point in delivering Elephant Park in London, and we're keeping our commitments, including the target to become the UK's first independently accredited 'Climate Positive' large-scale development. The fact that the feasibility study into different energy options led us to conclude that it would be counter-productive to have large quantities of biomass (wood pellets) delivered into central London – and that it would be both cleaner and greener to install a highly efficient gas CHP (combined heat and power) plant with a contracted bio-methane grid-injected offset (approved by the C40 Climate Positive Programme) – doesn't lessen that commitment. On the contrary, it supports and improves upon it.

Lendlease does not pretend to have all the answers. As we listen and learn – whether that's from expert ecologists regarding our BEN (Biodiversity, Ecology, Nature) strategy or local people who told us how much they valued the mature trees that had grown to 5 storeys high in the midst of the former Heygate Estate, we aim to do things better, and to continually raise the bar on ourselves.

For example, the original plan for Elephant Park didn't envisage the creation of the Southwark Construction Skills centre, which has already trained thousands of local people, or that we would deliver the very first Passivhaus certified townhouses in Zone 1 London, built using carbon positive cross-laminated timber.

We always welcome constructive challenge. The best way to judge our efforts at Elephant Park is for people living in London and the UK to come and see for themselves. We're always happy to listen, learn and explain why we are doing what we are doing. You can download a factsheet about Elephant Park and our [sustainability commitments here](#).

Key points

Biodiversity survey – The author refers to a biodiversity survey being conducted to bolster claims of community engagement. The survey was actually a planning requirement to provide a baseline for the quantity and quality of biodiversity on the site that could then be compared against to measure a net increase in biodiversity as a result of the development. We're on track to deliver against this commitment. For example, our tree strategy commits us to deliver a 5 per cent increase in tree canopy by the time the project completes in 2025. With seven years still to go, we've already planted more than 1,000 semi-mature trees in Elephant & Castle so are well on our way.

Energy and Climate Positive – The article makes a number of claims of broken promises when it comes to energy provision at Elephant Park. In particular, it suggests that Elephant Park's commitment to be a carbon neutral scheme as part of the C40 Cities Climate Positive Development Program is now at risk and the scheme's sustainability credentials therefore are in question.

Elephant Park is, in fact, on track to deliver a climate positive scheme by the time it is completed in 2025. The article is correct to point out that the original plans for energy provision across Elephant Park – plans that were in place before Lendlease had signed the regeneration agreement or even submitted a planning application – have had to be adapted and amended over time. The important thing is that when changes are made, new plans still have sustainability and the same level of commitment at their heart.



We're working with E.on to provide a net-zero carbon CHP plant at Elephant Park. Combined with every other sustainability initiative across the project, our energy strategy is one the key reasons we were able to submit a roadmap in 2013 to the Climate Positive Development Program showing how the project would be Climate Positive by 2025. This made us only the third project out of 19 across the world to reach participant status and we remain on track to deliver on our commitments.

The Elephant Park Energy Hub, which is in construction, will include a CHP plant using natural gas, offset by grid-injected biomethane, that will deliver net zero-carbon, affordable heat and hot water to residents and businesses across Elephant Park. It will have the capacity to connect into a further 1,000 homes across the Elephant & Castle Opportunity Area.

An offsite biomethane solution ensures both the greatest CO2 reduction whilst also taking advantage of the existing gas network and infrastructure to limit local disruption caused by additional vehicle movements, odour and noise. This strategy was accepted by C40 in Elephant Park's Carbon Positive Roadmap (a summary of which is published on the C40 website).

The article criticises Lendlease for not delivering Southwark Council's 20 on-site renewable energy provision. Delivering renewable energy sources in densely populated parts of central London is extremely difficult. Nonetheless at Elephant Park we have ensured 20% renewable energy provision through a mix on onsite and offsite solutions.

Blocking TfL cycle route – The article says Lendlease blocked a TfL cycle route bypass but provides no evidence of this. We are working closely with TfL and Southwark Council to install new cycle routes through Elephant Park.

Car priority – The author suggests that our masterplan prioritises cars over pedestrians and cyclists. We have permission to deliver some car parking provision across the development but in the two most recent phases we have submitted plans for we have chosen not to take up this allowance. We will deliver over 3,000 parking spaces for bikes and a number of new pedestrian and cycle routes. One of the most recent decisions we have made is to pedestrianise the road next to our park, which had originally been intended for use by vehicles.

Park size – The author has presented an inaccurate description of our plans for public spaces across Elephant Park. The author has suggested that the park at the centre of the development has shrunk from 24,195 sqm to 8,220 sqm. We have never committed to delivering a park 24,195 sqm in size. Our commitment is to deliver a park of at least 8,000 sqm in size but our current plans will see us deliver one of more than 9,000 sqm. In addition, we'll deliver other public spaces, such as new playgrounds and pocket parks, as well as new retail streets and civic squares. In total, we will deliver up to 53,500 sqm of new public spaces, meaning almost half the total development area will be publicly accessible space open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Jobs created – Through the development of Elephant Park more than 6,000 jobs will be created (5,000 during construction and 1,000 in the completed development). We are investing heavily to ensure as many of these jobs go to local people. Since construction began, we have employed more than 950 local people with almost half of these jobs filled by people who were previously unemployed.

£70m profit figure – The article states a 'reported' profit figure without providing any source for this figure. This is not a figure we have ever reported. We assume the author has taken it from a Southwark News article that we have already questioned.

The profit and revenue numbers presented are inaccurate and materially overstated. By way of example, they do not include accurate construction costs, significant development costs, design and planning costs or contributions towards infrastructure. In addition, the gross revenue figure has been converted from Australian Dollars at an incorrect exchange rate.

Social housing – Southwark Council made a conscious decision to replace the former Heygate Estate with a very different kind of place – one that forms an important part of the wider Elephant & Castle Opportunity Area.



Elephant Park was envisaged as a key new destination, providing homes, shops and amenities for a wide range of people visiting, living, and working in the area. It was for the Council to determine the appropriate level of affordable and social housing, and Lendlease – as the Council’s regeneration partner identified through a rigorous public procurement process – committed to delivering a minimum of 25 per cent affordable homes, out of a total of around 3,000 high-quality, sustainable, tenure-blind new homes overall.

We’ve committed to deliver a minimum of 25 per cent affordable housing and we are delivering against this on a phase by phase basis. Southwark Council specified the area for development and mix of tenures for the site. This level of affordable housing will be delivered irrespective of any falls in house prices or increases in construction costs during the life of the development.

Finally, a team of experienced professionals at Southwark Council was involved in plans to regenerate the area, the aim; to bring new jobs and opportunities and also to offer access to better facilities and housing that is fit for purpose. As per procedure, the Council put out to tender its requirements of a regeneration partner. After a rigorous tendering process, we were selected as the Council’s partner and have worked with Southwark to meet their aims ever since.