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putting Lambeth on the map

London's Lambeth Borough Council is putting a variety of documents online using Adobe Acrobat, including detailed planning maps.

One of the 13 inner London boroughs, Lambeth ranges from the river Thames at Waterloo to Streatham and Norwood and includes a wide ethnic mix in a population of just a quarter of a million people.

BENEFITS SUMMARY

- PDF provides a reliable format that ensures that visitors to the Lambeth Web site will see electronic versions of documents that appear exactly the same as their printed counterparts.
- Creating PDF files from internal office or professionally-designed print documents is a simple and straightforward process, unlike conversion to HTML.
- PDF versions of borough maps provide scalable and cleanly-printing downloadable versions for developers and other people interested in planning issues.
- Adobe Illustrator with Avenza Map Publisher plug-in is a powerful tool for map creation and editing.

www.lambeth.gov.uk

Encompassing a variety of famous historic and cultural landmark buildings, from the Oval Cricket ground and the Archbishop of Canterbury's official residence to the Old Vic and the Royal Festival Hall, the Borough of Lambeth is one of thirteen inner London authorities. It's also a rich ethnic mix, with over 132 languages being spoken – after English, the main languages are Yoruba and Portuguese.

For the time being at least, Lambeth council is concentrating its efforts on publishing its information online in English. As part of that, it's using Adobe PDF documents to present reliably viewable and printable versions of a variety of documents, from minutes and agendas to major publications such as its Unitary Development Plan.

Senior policy planner Andrew Lainton has been instrumental in the introduction of PDF, having been closely involved in similar introductions in his previous job at Brent Council.

"At Brent we not only put council documents online, but also application forms. We ran a consultation exercise and know that they were well received, as people could download them and print them out without having to contact us at all. It cut phone calls

making requests for the printed planning forms by a third," he says.

"The advantage of PDF is that you can put a document that looks the same as its printed version on a Web page; converting to pure HTML means a difficult workflow, especially for long technical documents."

The plans at Lambeth are more ambitious and include not only regular documents but planning maps and ultimately all documents – "The ideal is to have a completely PDF-driven workflow, using dynamic forms," Lainton says.

UP TO THE MINUTE MAPS

Maps play a major role in planning policy-making and implementation, and providing detailed up to date maps to developers and other planning applicants is a time-consuming task.

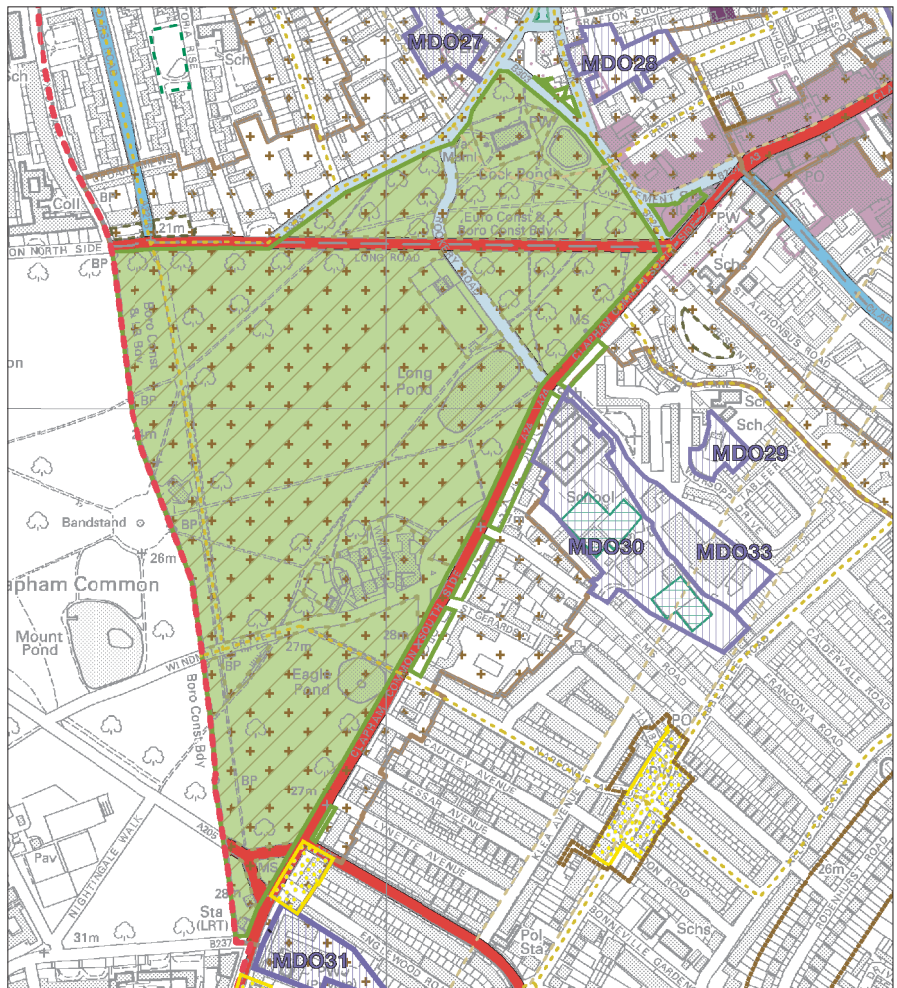
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**– Andrew Lainton, senior policy planner,
Lambeth Borough Council**

Lambeth Council has produced online maps with conventional mapping data from a geographical information system. These are currently presented on the Web site as a series of over 1000 GIF files, but plans are underway to supplement these with PDF versions generated from a new master map that is being prepared using Adobe Illustrator with the Avenza Map Publisher plug-in. This combines a raster version of the 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey Digital Landplan with zone boundaries and classifications for planning purposes.

“Ideally we’d only have one file format for the maps, but the GIF version ensures that everyone can see them right now, while the PDF version, being a binary file, will download quickly and will scale and print better because it is vector based,” explains Lainton.

Links will be made between PDF versions of planning documents and the relevant sections of the map, so that readers can easily study the map of the affected area when reviewing development proposals. As mapping details change, the Illustrator file will be updated accordingly and new PDF files made and placed on the Web site to keep it up to date.



An uncommon view:
 this PDF map of Clapham Common overlays planning classifications and references onto the existing Ordnance Survey digital map. Links to and from the relevant planning documents, also in PDF, make it easy to get a complete view of a project or proposal.

TOOL KIT

Software
 Adobe Acrobat 5.0
 Adobe Illustrator 9.0
 Avenza Map Publisher plug-in

Hardware
 PCs