



EastEnders planning 'first' gets green light

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A planning first which enables some changes to be made to the set of EastEnders without seeking formal permission could pave the way for other sites in the country to follow suit.

Our councillors agreed at a meeting last week to formally adopt a [Local Development Order](#) (LDO) that covers part of BBC Elstree where the new set is being constructed. The order extends permitted development rights and eliminates the need for planning applications to be made for certain types of development at the site, which is located in the centre of Borehamwood. The order, which comes into effect on Saturday (1 February), will help the production team when undertaking changes to the new set.

It is thought to be the first example of an LDO being used for a film and TV production site in the country. The LDO sets out parameters on the heights of buildings, the total landscaped area, and elevational changes. It is linked to the original planning permission granted for the construction of a permanent film and television stage set in July 2015. It will also be used as a tool for the scriptwriters, so they know what restrictions on the set to follow.

Adrien Waite, our Head of Planning and Economic Development said: "We've worked closely with the BBC throughout this process to ensure the LDO provides greater flexibility for scriptwriters and production teams, while introducing safeguards to protect residents from development within the site which could impact on them.

"Any substantive changes to the new EastEnders set will still require planning permission but the LDO means planning applications for routine set changes will be avoided and staff resources can be focussed on other important work.

"I hope the LDO marks the beginning of a significant and successful new chapter in the borough's long-running relationship with the BBC, and with the creative industry, in general. Its use in this way could serve as a model for other TV and film production sites."

The new EastEnders set, which involves permanent structures built with real materials rather than the facades used on the original lot, is being constructed on the former staff car park and due to come into use next year. It will enable filming in high definition.

The decision to adopt the order, which was approved at a full council meeting on Wednesday 22 January, was made after an informal public engagement event and a formal four-week consultation period were held last year.

It comes at a boomtime for creative industry in the borough. At the end of last year, Sky Studios announced plans to build a new 32-acre TV and film studio in Borehamwood and exactly a week ago plans to build two linked sound stages on the site of the former Big Brother house at Elstree Studios were approved by the council.

LDOs are used for a range of commercial, business and residential developments. Currently there are more than 130 in place in the UK.

The LDO will remain in place for 30 years.

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