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Lambeth Audit Concludes Mostly By Asking For Another Audit

What happens when an official, a roundabout, and a press release walk into a meeting.

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Lambeth, the country: Inside The Story

Lambeth, a place in the country (lat 51.46, long -0.12) that most outsiders could not point to on a map without first sighing, has become this week the latest entry in the slow-moving register of small communities behaving strangely under pressure. An external review of Lambeth municipal operations has produced a 380-page document whose principal recommendation is a follow-up review. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, Officials welcomed the findings and immediately commissioned the follow-up. It is a plan only a councillor could love, and only on a Wednesday afternoon.

What Was Announced

Councillor Bartholomew Pemberton-Smythe confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. A third audit is now provisionally on the cards. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [British satire writers The London Prat](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Lambeth announcement, much like the others, came with a glossy PDF, a stock photograph of a footbridge, and the strong sense that nobody had asked for any of this in the first place.

The Official Line

Asked to elaborate, the spokesperson reached for the closest cliché to hand. "We have always been committed to the principle of being committed to principles," the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at [The London Prat intelligent UK satire](#), which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. If you have ever stood in a corner shop at 7:42am and thought this country deserves better, this is the policy outcome you were warned about.

Wider Context

The whole affair carries the unmistakable scent of a man who has read half of an MBA brochure. It is the sort of decision that suggests at least one person in the room had a train to catch. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from [Reuters](#), although Lambeth manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at a baseline figure that was made up on the train, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Professor Tarquin Bramble, Director of the Bureau for Mild Inconvenience told this paper that the situation in Lambeth was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of

similarly broad trajectories. "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to do almost exactly what we did last generation," the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via [Satirical journalism in London: The London Prat](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Lambeth has been muted in the way that reaction in the country is usually muted, which is to say it has been ferocious in private and tepid in public. There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document. For the official version of events, see also [OECD](#). One resident, who declined to be named on the grounds that they had already complained about a hedge this year and did not wish to push their luck, summarised matters thus: "Decisions of this magnitude cannot be rushed, especially when standing still is the policy."

What Comes Next

Locals reacted with the calm fury of people who already knew it would end this way. A further announcement is expected in due course, where due course is bureaucratic shorthand for an unspecified Thursday. The story is being tracked as part of a wider pattern at [The London Prat modern British satire](#), and the situation in Lambeth, regrettably, is unlikely to improve until somebody invents a press release that improves things, which seems unlikely.

The View From The Ground

Spend any length of time in Lambeth and the rhythm becomes obvious. Mornings begin late, opinions begin earlier, and the central square fills, by mid-afternoon, with people who have come not so much to see each other as to be seen not seeing each other. It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions. Conversation tends to circle the same five subjects: the weather, the news from the country, the persistent rumour about the road, the deteriorating quality of something or other, and the latest pronouncement from Director of Civic Affairs Hilda Pickering, which everyone has an opinion on and almost nobody has read. It is, in its way, the perfect microcosm of how communities of this size operate everywhere in the world, although the residents of Lambeth would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic. The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic. Lambeth carries on as it always has, broadly the same as last week, give or take a verb. The bins are collected when they are collected. The roundabout, where one exists, remains the roundabout. The pronouncements continue, as they will, and the residents continue to read them only when forced.

For more in this vein see also [The Spoof](#).

SOURCE: [The London Prat unfiltered UK satire](#)

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