Neighbourhood Planning

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Introduction to the planning system

• Planning policy documents are used by planning officers to determine planning applications.
• Planning policy documents are produced at the:
  – National level (Central Government)
  – Regional level (Greater London Authority)
  – Borough level (London Borough of Lewisham)
Neighbourhood planning

• Neighbourhood plans: new type planning policy document at the neighbourhood level.

• Neighbourhood plans are produced by local community groups, not the council.

• Neighbourhood plans are entirely optional – the community decides whether to produce one.
In order to produce a neighbourhood plan....
Formal designations (1)

• In order to produce a neighbourhood plan, a community group must:
  – be designated as a **Neighbourhood Forum** by the Council
  – be designated a **Neighbourhood Area** by the Council

• Forum and Area applications must be submitted by community groups to the Council’s Planning Policy team.
Formal designations (2)

• Designations are made by the Mayor, who receives advice from planning officers.
Neighbourhood Forums (1)

- Neighbourhood plans can only be produced by Neighbourhood Forums.
- Any group can apply to become a neighbourhood forum, but must meet basic criteria:
  - Established with express purpose to improve area,
  - Membership open to residents, workers and local elected members,
  - A minimum of 21 people,
  - Has a written constitution.
Neighbourhood Forums (2)

- There are further detailed issues that the Council should consider, including whether the members are representative of the local community.
Neighbourhood Areas (1)

- Neighbourhood plans can only be produced for designated areas.

- Community groups can apply to the Council to designate any area they choose.

- Area designation application can be submitted at same time as forum designation application.
Neighbourhood Areas (2)

• An area should be based on local people’s “understanding and knowledge of the geography and character of the neighbourhood.” (National Planning Practice Guidance)

• Not required to follow administrative boundaries, however cross-borough working is likely to take longer.
Neighbourhood Plan

- Once designated, a forum can produce a neighbourhood plan.

- A neighbourhood plan contains planning policies to influence future developments.

- Estimated minimum production time of 12 months.

- Neighbourhood plans must be independently examined and then be voted for adoption by public referendum.
Neighbourhood plan-making process (example)

Community engagement
- Themes, aims, vision
  - Evidence
    - Options
      - Consultation

Write plan
- Consultation
- Submission to Council
  - Examination
  - Referendum

Adoption
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (1)

• CIL is money collected from new developments. From Spring 2015.

• No neighbourhood plan in place = 15% of local CIL collected spent within community

• Neighbourhood plan in place = 25% of local CIL collected spent within community
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (1)

- Money spent by Council, in consultation with community

- Spending can be guided by infrastructure requirements identified in neighbourhood plan
Status of neighbourhood planning in Lewisham

- **Crofton Park & Honor Oak Park**: designated forum & area.

- **Grove Park**: designated forum & area.

- **Corbett Estate**: submitted forum and area applications to Council.

- **New Cross**: draft application stage.
Further advice

• Advice notes available on the Council’s website: Google “Lewisham neighbourhood plans”.

• Detailed guidance and funding information available on the Locality website: http://locality.org.uk/
Contacts

• Contact the planning policy team to discuss further.
• We can meet with prospective neighbourhood forums.
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