

Mayor & Cabinet		
Report Title	Designation of Deptford Neighbourhood Action Neighbourhood Area and Forum	
Key Decision	Yes	Item No.
Ward	Evelyn, New Cross and Brockley	
Contributors	Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration & Head of Law	
Class	Part 1	Date: 17 February 2016

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Council received an application from a community group called Deptford Neighbourhood Action (DNA) for the designation of a Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area in Deptford.
- 1.2. The Council have completed two periods of public consultation with the local community in relation to the applications. The first period of public consultation took place between 7th October 2015 and 19th November 2015 and the second took place between 11th December 2015 and 22nd January 2016.
- 1.3. Council officers have assessed the applications as meeting the required conditions for formal designation as set out in the relevant legislation. Officers recommend designating both the DNA Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area apportioned within the London Borough of Lewisham (LBL).
- 1.4. The formal designation of the DNA Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area would allow the forum to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for the Neighbourhood Area.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This report seeks the Mayor's approval for the formal designation of DNA applications for the Neighbourhood Forum and a Neighbourhood Area. Formal designation would allow the Forum to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. The Mayor is recommended to approve the designation of the DNA Neighbourhood Area as set out at Annex 3.
- 3.2. The Mayor is recommended to designate the Deptford Neighbourhood Action Neighbourhood Forum as set out at Annex 2.
- 3.3. The Mayor is recommended to authorise the Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration to undertake the required publicity of the designations.

4. Policy Context

- 4.1. The Localism Act (2011) allows Neighbourhood Forums to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) and Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDO).
- 4.2. NDPs are prepared by the local community but formally Made (that is approved or adopted) by the Council after a successful referendum that is organised by the Council. Once Made they become part of the Development Plan for the borough and as such are part of the Council's policy framework that must be considered when making decisions on planning applications.
- 4.3. NDOs are a form of planning permission for a specific development proposal.
- 4.4. This report, recommending the creation of the DNA Neighbourhood Forum and the designation of the DNA Neighbourhood Area (apportioned within the London Borough of Lewisham) supports the Council's Corporate Priorities and the objectives outlined in the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy. This is because the proposed DNA Forum's purpose is to "promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the neighbourhood area". This is taken from their constitution and is required by the Localism Act 2011.
- 4.5. In particular, this report supports the Council Priority 'Community Leadership and Empowerment: developing opportunities for the active participation and engagement of people in the life of the community'. This report also supports the Sustainable Community Strategy policy objective 'Empowered and Responsible: where people can be actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities'. Consequently, the Council is committed to empowering local residents to play an active role in the life of the borough. This is because the proposed Neighbourhood Forum would give people another way to influence decision making and to have a say in the way that their neighbourhood develops through the production of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. In addition, the Sustainable Community Strategy states that to support the empowered and responsible communities, "we will work together to promote volunteering and the activity of voluntary and community organisations". It should be noted that Neighbourhood Forums are made up of volunteers and the proposed forum's constitution states that the preparation,

development and production of Neighbourhood Development Plan will aim to encourage community cohesion and citizenship.

- 4.6. This report also supports the Sustainable Community Strategy objective of 'clean, green and liveable: where people live in affordable, high quality and adaptable housing, have access to green spaces and take responsibility for their impact on the environment'. The purpose of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum is to protect and maximise the amount and quality of green space and increase the provision of quality social and affordable housing amongst other objectives.

5. Background

- 5.1. The Localism Act (2011) enables local communities to influence the planning of their area by preparing NDPs and NDOs. In areas such as Lewisham where there are no Parish Councils a Neighbourhood Forum must be designated by the Council to obtain the right to prepare a NDP or NDO.
- 5.2. NDPs are led by local people so that they can set out how they want their local area to develop. Local people set out the vision and planning policies for their own neighbourhood. NDPs are about local issues rather than strategic planning issues. They must take account of national planning policy and be in 'general conformity' with the existing adopted strategic planning policies for Lewisham. The government's aim is that they will promote development, they are not about attempts to prevent development.
- 5.3. When the plan has been through all the stages of preparation, examination and a successful referendum the Council can make the NDP. The NDP will then become a statutory planning document which will form a part of the Borough's development plan. When determining planning applications the law provides that the determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4. A NDP is a plan which sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in a Neighbourhood Area. It may contain a range of policies or proposals for land use development that will carry weight in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.5. In this context the Local Planning Authorities' (LPAs) responsibilities which can be summarised as:
- Agreeing and designating the area of the neighbourhood plan
 - Designating a neighbourhood forum
 - Providing advice and support to the neighbourhood forum in preparing the neighbourhood plan
 - Arranging and paying for an Independent Examination of the neighbourhood plan
 - Arranging and paying for a local referendum

- 5.6. There are specific requirements set out in the Act and the neighbourhood planning regulations for Neighbourhood Forums to be designated as qualifying bodies.
- 5.7. The regulations require that for an application to be designated a Neighbourhood Forum and /or Area therefore must include, amongst other things, the following information:
- A copy of the written constitution of the proposed forum
 - A map showing the proposed neighbourhood area
 - A statement explaining how the proposed forum is established to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area
 - A statement explaining that membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area and from different sections of the community
 - A list of at least 21 individual members of the proposed forum.
- 5.8. The proposed DNA Neighbourhood Area is a cross borough area and includes parts of the LBL and a smaller part of the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) to the eastern portion of the proposed Neighbourhood Area. Each authority only has the power to determine the Neighbourhood Area that falls within their own borough boundary. Similarly, each authority can only determine whether the proposed Neighbourhood Forum can act within the part of the Neighbourhood Area that falls within their borough boundary. Therefore, the DNA community group has had to submit separate applications to both LBL and RBG.
- 5.9. The DNA Neighbourhood Forum and Area applications were received by the planning service in August 2015. The planning service checked that the correct paperwork had been submitted and then arranged for the statutory six week publicity to be given to both applications. The decision was made to carry out the first publicity campaign jointly with RBG. The first period of public consultation was carried out between 7th October 2015 and 19th November 2015 and the second period of public consultation was carried out between 11th December 2015 and 22nd January 2016.
- 5.10. The designation of a Neighbourhood Forum and a Neighbourhood Area are two separate processes, which can be undertaken simultaneously. Section 7 of this report considers whether the forum application meets the statutory requirements, and section 8 of this report considers whether the area application meets the statutory requirements.

6. Public consultation

- 6.1. The Neighbourhood Planning (General Regulations) 2012 (as amended) require the Council to undertake the public consultation in relation to the proposal and in accordance with the Regulations.
- 6.2. Both applications were placed on the planning policy webpage and comments invited. In addition to this statutory requirement, a publicity notice was

circulated to households and commercial premises in the proposed Neighbourhood Area and in a further 150m buffer zone around the proposed Neighbourhood Area so that those on the boundary would have the opportunity to comment. A letter or email was sent to all local people on the planning policy data base inviting comment and providing details of where further information could be obtained. The applications and associated information were also placed in the planning information office at Laurence House and at the library at Deptford Lounge for people to inspect. The first round of public consultation lasted for six weeks, from 7th October 2015 to 19th November 2015. A total of 25 representations were made.

- 6.3. Given the low response rate, officers decided to hold a second period of public consultation. The second period of public consultation took place between 11th December 2015 to 22nd January 2016.
- 6.4. Officers decided to undertake a second round of public consultation using additional consultation methods to maximise public outreach. Therefore, rather than circulate another round of leaflets, officers erected approximately 25 posters throughout the part of the Neighbourhood Area that falls within the LBL. Officers also requested a poster be displayed at the Deptford library. Letters were sent via post to any properties that were known to have been inaccessible to the leaflet distribution company. The applications were published on the Lewisham Council website.
- 6.5. A further ten responses were received during the second round of public consultation.
- 6.6. During the course of both consultation periods, 35 responses were received: 29 from members of the public and 6 from statutory organisations. 17 of the responses that were made by members of the public were sent in by people with postcodes from within the proposed Neighbourhood Area, six were from members of the public that held postcodes from outside of the area. A further six representations were received from people who declined to supply their postcode.
- 6.7. A total of 24 representations received generally supported all or part (either area or forum) of the applications, and two outright objections to all or part (either area or forum) were received. A summary of these responses can be found in annex 1 of this report.
- 6.8. There were 18 responses made that explicitly supported the proposed Neighbourhood Forum. The summary of the main reasons for supporting the proposed Neighbourhood Forum is as follows:
 - DNA have consulted well and come up with some good proposals for the area.

- Deptford is changing rapidly and needs a strong local voice to ensure it isn't changed just for developers to make a quick profit.
- This will be an important opportunity to have a say regarding local needs, as well as a means of sustaining rather than alienating communities.
- A Neighbourhood Forum is needed in Deptford
- With a population that is perceived as socially low-status, it has always been difficult for Deptford to make its voice heard above the clamour of private and public vested interests. The establishment of a Neighbourhood Forum would offer a platform for that voice to be heard more distinctly, as regards the development of the town.
- A Neighbourhood Forum is certainly one important avenue through which can be focused a productive sense of communal unity.
- [DNA] seem competent to put together a Plan that could express what local people want.

6.9. Additionally, two respondents offered qualified support for the proposed Forum, stating that they would support the proposal if the area was expanded to include the following or their own property:

- Brookmill Road included at least as far as Elverson Road but ideally including the conservation area up to St John's station.
- The Woodpecker neighbourhood (Milton Court, Ludwick Mews estates, Five Ways Tennant Management Cooperative and other estates adjacent to Fordham Park), or
- The boundary should run down Sanford Street then eastward along Edward Street.

6.10. Of the responses, one response submitted a qualified objection that the forum would not be supported if the respondent was not able to participate. As the respondent lived outside the proposed Neighbourhood Area, it is assumed that they may not be able to join the forum and therefore, the objection stands. In the same thread, the respondent raised a concern that the forum is being created to resist change/development.

6.11. One outright objection to the proposed Forum (as applied for) was received. A summary of the main reasons for this objection are as follows:

- A majority of DNA active members are active in other areas
- Membership recruitment can meet qualifying regulations but still be contained and extraneous to the neighbourhood locality.
- It is an easy opportunity for a clique to gain influence and funding for their own interests and agenda over long term local residents' needs and concerns
- Long standing and community minded residents are aware that the current members of DNA have very little connection or knowledge of the Deptford area or issues

- Any planning involvement they may have will no doubt NOT focus on the long standing problems of the area but a project for housing themselves under the community sustainability banner.
- 6.12. Officers have included a full officer response to these objections that can be found within Annex 1 of this report.
- 6.13. Of the responses, 17 explicitly stated that they supported the proposed Neighbourhood Area. A summary of the reasons are as follows:
- I especially like that the boundary includes areas that are part of the Deptford community but are in Greenwich borough, in fact I was surprised that areas that I've always thought of as Deptford (everything west of the creek) are in a different borough to me.
 - It is my view that the riparian 'Deptford', as defined, is a wholly appropriate example of a distinct neighbourhood for the following reasons: It is a historic town with a distinct and internationally-known heritage; It has an economic, cultural and demographic character that distinguishes it sharply from the rest of the two London Boroughs within which it stands
- 6.14. Two respondents stated that the area is incorrect. A summary of the main reasons for this are:
- The extent of the area is too large and I do not believe that the northern part of Deptford (Surrey Quays) reflects that of the south area. Therefore, I don't see how residents of the south would positively contribute to the development in the north and visa versa.
 - I do not consider the area proposed boundary as offered by DNA to be representative of the people that live in Deptford as it chooses to leave out areas of Deptford, with a postcode of SE8. I am aware that the argument for this boundary is that the area is considered to be St John's but I do not consider it to be St John's. Stealing part of Deptford to link with Greenwich whilst leaving out other Deptford residents is just not on.
- 6.15. Additionally, two respondents offered qualified support for the Neighbourhood Area, on the basis that it is extended as per paragraph 6.9 of this report.
- 6.16. Historic England provided a fairly neutral comment to recommend the inclusion of the conservation area in their entirety. In this case, Historic England recommended that it would be beneficial to extend the proposed neighbourhood boundary to encompass the small area of New Cross Road to the west of Florence Street, part of the Deptford High Street Conservation Area, so that a consistent approach can be taken to buildings within the designated area. Lewisham's Senior Conservation Officer concurred and added that the Deptford Conservation Area has just undergone a review. It has highlighted the potential for including the mid 19th century terraces along New Cross Road between Florence Road and Watson's Street in the east and

the railway bridge/railway station to the west into the conservation area. Lewisham's Senior Conservation Officer added that it would be preferable to have this stretch of the southern side of New Cross Road included in order to ensure that policies are applied consistently for both sides of the street and for the small area that is within the Deptford High Street Conservation Area but currently not included in the Neighbourhood Area.

- 6.17. It should be noted that the Localism Act 2011 does not make provision for the Mayor to extend the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area further than the area that has been applied for through the application. Therefore, another application would have to be submitted to include these areas. Given that the policies of any forthcoming NDP would have to comply with the strategic policies of the Council's borough plan, it is considered that there would not be significant disadvantage to the small part of the conservation area, although the preference to include conservation areas in their entirety.

7. DNA Neighbourhood Forum application

- 7.1. Section 61F (5) and (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted into the Act by the Localism Act, Schedule 9) sets out the conditions that a neighbourhood forum must meet, as well as the detailed considerations that a LPA must take into account when determining an application for the designation of a neighbourhood forum.

- 7.2. In assessing the application for a neighbourhood forum the Council will consider the application against the conditions and considerations set out in legislation and in doing so will ensure that the proposed forum is representative of its area.

- 7.3. The legislation states that a LPA may designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum if the authority is satisfied that the following four conditions have been met. The legislation does not require applicants to give more than the basic information. The four conditions are considered below:

i) Established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic or environmental well-being of an area

- 7.4. **Response:** The written constitution states that the "purpose of the Forum is to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area".

- 7.5. The written stated purpose of the Forum meets the legal requirement for the forum to be established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic or environmental well-being of an area.

ii) Membership is open to individuals who live or work in the area (or are elected members of the Council whose area falls within the Neighbourhood Area concerned)

- 7.6. **Response:** The constitution states membership is open to all people aged 16 or over that:
- live within the Neighbourhood Area;
 - work in the Neighbourhood Area either on a paid or voluntary basis;
 - Are an elected Lewisham or Greenwich London Borough Council member representing a ward in the Neighbourhood Area.

7.7. The Forum constitution as written therefore meets membership eligibility requirements set out in the legislation.

iii) Membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom lives or works (or is an elected member) in the area

7.8. **Response:** The information submitted with the forum application included the names of 39 members, comprising of:

- 18 residents of the area,
- 12 business owners / workers (paid or voluntary) in the area
- Six people that live and work in the area, and
- Three elected member for the area.

7.9. It is noted that six of the forum proposers have failed to supply their full postcode and one forum proposer that is stated to live and work in the area falls just outside of the proposed Neighbourhood Area. Nevertheless, the proposed forum surpasses the legislative requirements of 21 eligible members.

iv) The Neighbourhood Forum has a written constitution

7.10. **Response:** The applicant has provided a written constitution, which is available as Annex 2 to this report.

7.11. In addition to the four conditions set out above, the legislation also states that a LPA has to have regard to three further considerations, which are addressed below:

i) The desirability of designating an organisation or body which has secured (or taken steps to secure) membership from each of the required categories (i.e. people who live, work or are elected members).

7.12. **Response:** The information submitted with the forum application included the names of 39 members, comprising of:

- 18 residents of the area,
- 12 business owners / workers (paid or voluntary) in the area
- Six people that live and work in the area, and
- Three elected member for the area.

7.13. It is noted that six of the forum proposers have failed to supply their full postcode and one forum proposer that is stated to live and work in the area

falls just outside of the proposed neighbourhood area. Nevertheless, the proposed forum surpasses the legislative requirements of 21 eligible members.

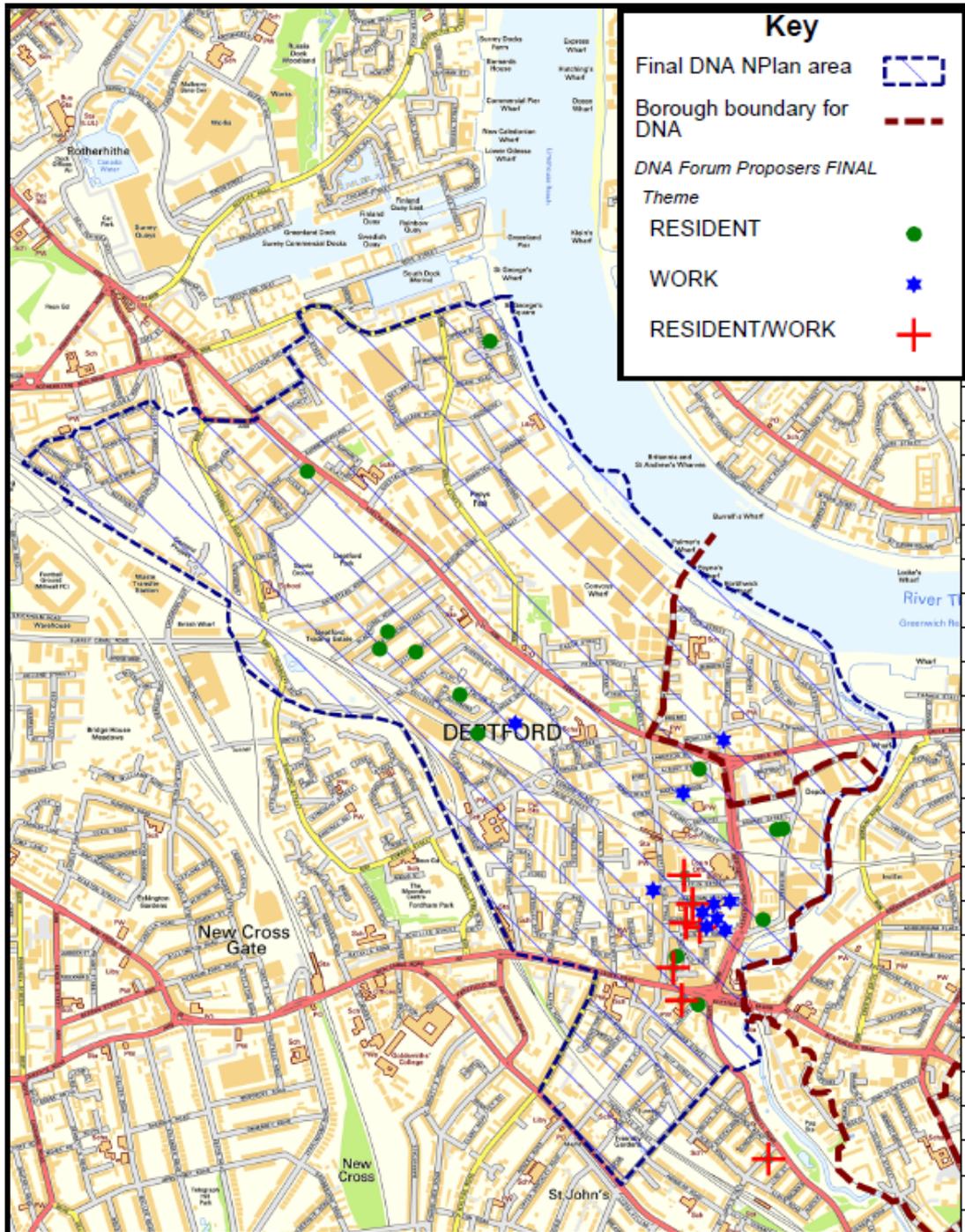
- 7.14. Although an objection has been received relating to the make up of the proposed DNA Neighbourhood Forum, officers consider that the DNA Neighbourhood Forum meets the legislative requirements.

ii) Whether membership is drawn from different places in the Neighbourhood Area concerned and from different sections of the community in the area.

- 7.15. **Response:** The map overleaf shows the geographic distribution of members of the proposed DNA Neighbourhood Forum.

- 7.16. Although there is a notable cluster of members southeast of the proposed Neighbourhood Area and around Deptford High Street / the old Tidemill School in particular, membership is drawn from different places within the proposed Neighbourhood Area.

- 7.17. Members are also from different sections of the community. Membership includes residents of different areas; workers, and three elected councillors from Lewisham.



iii) Whether the *purpose* of the Neighbourhood Forum reflects (in general terms) the character of the area.

7.18. **Response:** The purpose of the Neighbourhood Forum, as set out in section 3 of the application made for the forum is to encourage, empower and enable the involvement of all communities living and working in the defined Neighbourhood Area in the preparation, production and implementation of the NDP which will aim to:

- [provide] An identity for Deptford.
- Encourage community cohesion and active citizenship.

- Improve the health of the local community.
- promote and develop places for all creative communities to flourish.
- Increase the provision and quality of social and affordable housing for local people on low and middle incomes.
- Promote the safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Protect and maximise the amount and quality of green space, open and public spaces in the promotion of a healthier environment.
- Promote and protect all forms of Deptford heritage and identities.

7.19. Therefore, it is considered that the purpose of the Neighbourhood Forum is reflective of the character of the area in general terms.

Neighbourhood Forum Application conclusion

7.20. The Neighbourhood Forum application meets the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) (as amended) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012). It is recommended that the forum be designated as such by the Mayor.

8. DNA Neighbourhood Area application

8.1. Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted into the Act by the Localism Act, Schedule 9) sets out the conditions that an application for a Neighbourhood Area must meet, as well as the considerations that a LPA should take into account when determining an application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area.

8.2. LBL does not contain any parish councils, therefore a number of the conditions and considerations do not apply. In light of these facts, there are two conditions and considerations relevant to this application, which are addressed in turn below.

i) The application is submitted by a body which is capable of being designated as a Neighbourhood Forum.

8.3. This condition is met in the case of the application made by the proposed DNA Neighbourhood Forum. The assessment found in section 7 of this report outlines that the applicant is capable of being formally designated as a Neighbourhood Forum.

ii) The area does not overlap with an existing Neighbourhood Area.

8.4. The proposed Neighbourhood Area does not overlap with an existing Neighbourhood Area. Therefore the condition is met.

ii) Whether the area is considered to be an appropriate area.

8.5. The legislation does not provide a framework for assessing the suitability of a proposed Neighbourhood Area beyond stating that the local authority can

refuse an application if the proposed area is considered to not be “an appropriate area”.

- 8.6. There are no minimum or maximum size limits for neighbourhood areas, and there is no requirement to follow administrative boundaries.
- 8.7. The National Planning Policy Guidance states that applicants should use their understanding and knowledge of the geography and character of their neighbourhood when proposing an area. The Guidance sets out further considerations including catchment areas for shops and services, formal and informal community networks, and physical characteristics of the area.
- 8.8. The applicant has provided an ‘Appropriate Area Statement’ which explains the rationale that led to the proposed boundaries for the Deptford Neighbourhood Action Area. The applicants’ note that the rationale can be described through four lenses:
 - Natural barriers such as waterways
 - Human made physical boundaries such as railways, major roads (A2) and green spaces.
 - Administrative boundaries (existing ones such as borough and ward boundaries, Evelyn, New Cross and Brockley Ward as well as historic ones such as the old Deptford Borough boundary).
- 8.9. The area crosses the boundary of three wards in Lewisham as well as crossing over the boundary with the Royal Borough of Greenwich. This is acceptable in principle as there is no requirement to follow administrative boundaries.
- 8.10. The applicant’s justification for the proposed area boundary is considered acceptable. The proposed boundary is considered to be an appropriate size for a neighbourhood area, and is considered to reflect the local physical and social characteristics.
- 8.11. In conclusion, it is considered that the part of the proposed area that falls within LBL’s jurisdiction is an appropriate one, and that area should be formally designated as a Neighbourhood Area.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. The Localism Act allows local communities to shape their areas through the use of Neighbourhood Development Plans, which will set out policies in relation to the development and use of land in a particular neighbourhood.
- 9.2. By virtue of section 61 G (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act a neighbourhood area is an area of a local authority which has been designated as such by the authority as a neighbourhood area. The power to designate only arises where a relevant body, as defined by section 61G(2) has applied to the LPA for designation of a neighbourhood area.

- 9.3. A relevant body includes a body “which is or is capable of being” designated a neighbourhood forum. The designation of a Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum may be dealt with under one report, but are two separate decisions.
- 9.4. The discretion given to local authorities by section 61G is broad for the designation of the neighbourhood area. The exercise of that discretion turns on the factual and policy considerations which exist in the individual case at the time the determination is made.
- 9.5. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.6. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 9.7. The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- 9.8. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice-and-technical-guidance/>
- 9.9. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

1. The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
2. Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
3. Engagement and the equality duty
4. Equality objectives and the equality duty
5. Equality information and the equality duty

9.10. The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

10. Equalities Implications

- 10.1. The Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme for 2012-16 provides an overarching framework and focus for the Council's work on equalities and helps ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 10.2. The Council will need to advise the Neighbourhood Forum if an Equalities Analysis Assessment (EAA) should be prepared as part of the preparation of the neighbourhood plan.
- 10.3. An EAA is the process of systematically analysing a proposed policy to identify what effect, or likely effect, will follow from the implementation of a policy for different groups in the community. By undertaking the EAA as part of the NP process it will ensure that equalities impacts have been fully taken into account in a systematic way

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. There are no additional costs to the Council arising from this report. The planning service have a duty to support Neighbourhood Forums in preparing neighbourhood plans and to this end there is an impact on the planning service in terms of staff time however these costs will be contained within the existing planning service budget. In addition, Central Government currently offers financial assistance to local authorities through the provision of grants. Currently local authorities can apply for a grant of £5,000 after the designation of a Neighbourhood Area and another £5,000 after the designation of a Neighbourhood Forum.

12. Environmental implications

- 12.1. There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1. Officers consider that the applications meet the requirements of the relevant legislation.
- 13.2. Officers consider that the proposed Forum's membership is drawn from different places in the proposed Neighbourhood Area concerned and from different sections of the community in the area, and that the purpose of the Neighbourhood Forum reflects (in general terms) the character of the area.
- 13.3. Therefore it is recommended that the proposed Neighbourhood Forum is formally designated.
- 13.4. Also, officers consider the proposed Neighbourhood Area to be an appropriate neighbourhood area in regards to local physical and social characteristics.
- 13.5. Therefore it is recommended that the proposed Neighbourhood Area (that falls within the Lewisham Borough boundary) is formally designated.

Background documents

Short Title Document	Date	File Location	File Reference	Contact Officer	Exempt
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations as amended	2012	Laurence House	Planning Policy	Brian Regan	No
Town and Country Planning Act (as amended)	1990	Laurence House	Planning Policy	Brian Regan	No
Localism Act	2011	Laurence House	Planning Policy	Brian Regan	No

If you have any queries on this report, please contact Brian Regan, Planning Policy Manager, 3rd floor Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, Catford SE6 4RU – telephone 020 8314 6438.

Annex 1: Summary of consultation responses for DNA Neighbourhood Forum and Area designations

Annex 2: DNA Neighbourhood Forum application

Annex 3: DNA Neighbourhood Area application

Annex 4: DNA Neighbourhood Area with Borough boundary shown