



LEWISHAM

CHARACTERISATION STUDY

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

December 2018

Allies and Morrison
Urban Practitioners



Contents

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Fig 1 Aerial photograph of the London Borough of Lewisham

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- 1.1.1 Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners was commissioned in February 2018 to prepare the Lewisham Characterisation Study on behalf of the London Borough of Lewisham. Characterisation provides a description of the physical form of the borough, its origins, places, streets and buildings to inform an understanding of the particular attributes which make the borough of Lewisham what it is today.
- 1.1.2 This report is an update to the previous 2010 version of the borough's characterisation as a response to the significant growth and change in the borough since this time. The study presents an invaluable opportunity to explore the borough's evolution and existing places in order to better understand what determines and contributes to existing local character in Lewisham and what should help inform future growth. An important part of this study is to help determine how this will be distinct for different parts of the borough.
- 1.1.3 This study will help to inform a policy approach in the emerging Local Plan and act as an evidence base document to inform a character and 'place-based' approach to growth in the borough.
- 1.1.4 This report first sets out the historic development of the borough and Lewisham's society today while Chapter 3 includes borough wide mapping of a number of important factors that impact on character. Chapter 4 analyses the typologies that have been identified in the borough and how these can be appropriately intensified, illustrated with precedents and illustrations. The report then turns to a more detailed analysis of the character and assets in each of the borough's places and neighbourhoods, identifying a series of tailored proposals for growth in different areas of the borough.

1.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE BOROUGH

- 1.2.1 The London Borough of Lewisham is located on the southern side of the River Thames. It stretches down to suburban South London taking in the centres of Deptford, Lewisham and Catford. The borough is bordered to the west by Southwark, to the east by Greenwich and to the south by Bromley.
- 1.2.2 The historical evolution of Lewisham Borough has led to a range of distinctive neighbourhoods served by a number of commercial centres, each with its own distinct character and community. The borough has a rich history that is protected by twenty-seven conservation areas.
- 1.2.3 Stark contrasts have evolved between the pre-industrial cores of Blackheath, Deptford and Lewisham in the north of the Borough, their mixed residential neighbourhoods surrounding them and the interwar growth that characterises much of the south of the Borough. Other notable phases of development have included the development of post-war estates, Lewisham shopping centre and most recently the growth associated with the extension of the DLR to Lewisham town centre.
- 1.2.4 The north of the borough is covered by two Opportunity Areas and so growth here is anticipated to continue in the medium long term, with opportunities enhanced by TfL's proposed extension to the Bakerloo line. Increased housing numbers for Lewisham in the New Draft London Plan places pressure for growth across the whole of the borough. This study will help provide a framework to understand this growth at a local level and guide new development to respect local character and distinctiveness.





2. SETTING THE SCENE

A view northwards from the campanile of the Catholic Church in Lewisham High Street in 1938 before wide scale demolition; the area to the bottom of the picture has been cleared for the Lewisham Centre. The railway and Ravensbourne run through the middle of the photograph.

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2 SETTING THE SCENE

2.1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOROUGH

- 2.1.1 Lewisham's history has shaped the remarkable diversity in its built environment today. Before 1700, Lewisham consisted of hamlets and farmsteads populated by landowners and farm workers. Places like Blackheath and Lewisham village became rural retreats for courtiers and aristocrats of London, escaping the crowded and often plague-ravaged city for the clean air of the country. Lewisham was well placed close to London but still rural. The Roman Watling Street provided a critical route through Lewisham from the city to Canterbury and Dover and influenced later development through to the present day.
- 2.1.2 Originally marsh land, Deptford was different from the rest of the borough, and was already a bustling town in Tudor times. Its prosperity was founded on ship building and the royal associations with the dockyard. Deptford quickly expanded in the 1700s whilst southern Lewisham retained its predominantly rural character. The opening of the canals, followed by the arrival of the railways and other cheaper forms of transport in the 19th century greatly accelerated development and population growth, particularly in the late Victorian era. By the onset of WWI, most of Lewisham's farming communities had transformed into commuter suburbs. To the south, Downham and Southend retained their rural character until the interwar years.
- 2.1.3 Between the wars, the area experienced unprecedented housing growth, and LCC and Lewisham Council built social housing at Grove Park, Bellingham and Downham. Deptford had suffered considerably in the late 1800s following the closure of the Royal Dockyard. Heavy industry had moved in, but unemployment had risen and the area was ridden with poverty and deprivation. Large numbers of residents were rehoused in the south.
- 2.1.4 Lewisham and Deptford were severely damaged in WWII, and prompted in part a radical post-war rebuilding of homes and streets. Since the 1930s, waves of migration brought large numbers of nurses and railway workers to settle

Pre 1700s
Ancient Lewisham

1700 to 1800
Town and country

1800 to 1850s
Unlocking the south

1860 to 1914
Rise of the commuter suburbs

1915 to 1949
Interwar years

1950 onwards
Rebuilding Lewisham

Rural setting, fresh air, proximity to London

Watling Street and London - Lewes road key routes to city

Great North Wood covers much of the borough, people employed in woodland activities

Prosperity of Deptford built on Royal Docks and shipbuilding

Croydon Canal opens in 1809 and supports growth of industry, makes areas less isolated

Opening of railways in 1830s transforms farming communities into commuter suburbs

Trams in 1870s greatly assist the growth of commuter suburbs

Political shift which focuses on welfare and social reform

WWII bomb damage leads to radical re-building programme

Changing socio-demographics

Regeneration

in Lewisham, followed by their families. In 1965, the Boroughs of Lewisham and Deptford merged to form one authority.

- 2.1.5 Lewisham's past can be glimpsed in the 'seen' - this includes its buildings and structural elements like its railways and rivers. Its past is also made known in the 'hidden' - for example place names, ghost signs and historic paving materials. The 'hidden' may still be tangible but is less obvious and tucked away. The documented history can be told through books, maps, photographs, research by local history societies and the accounts of residents. This section sets the scene for the character of Lewisham today.

Drivers of change

Ancient Lewisham characterised by large areas of farmland and forest with a few dispersed hamlets, and maritime Deptford to north



Pre 1700s Ancient Lewisham

- Pre 1700s Large areas of Lewisham covered in forests, including The Great North Wood, are gradually cut down for timber for use in Deptford docks



1700s-1800s Cusp of change

- 1801 Lewisham Enclosure Act leads to speculative development

- 1809 Canals, Croydon and Grand Surrey, make areas of Lewisham less isolated



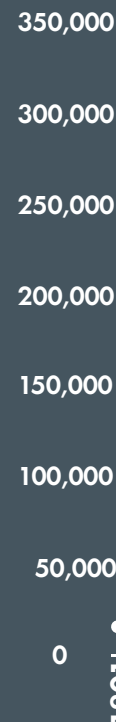
- 1838 Arrival of railways to Deptford

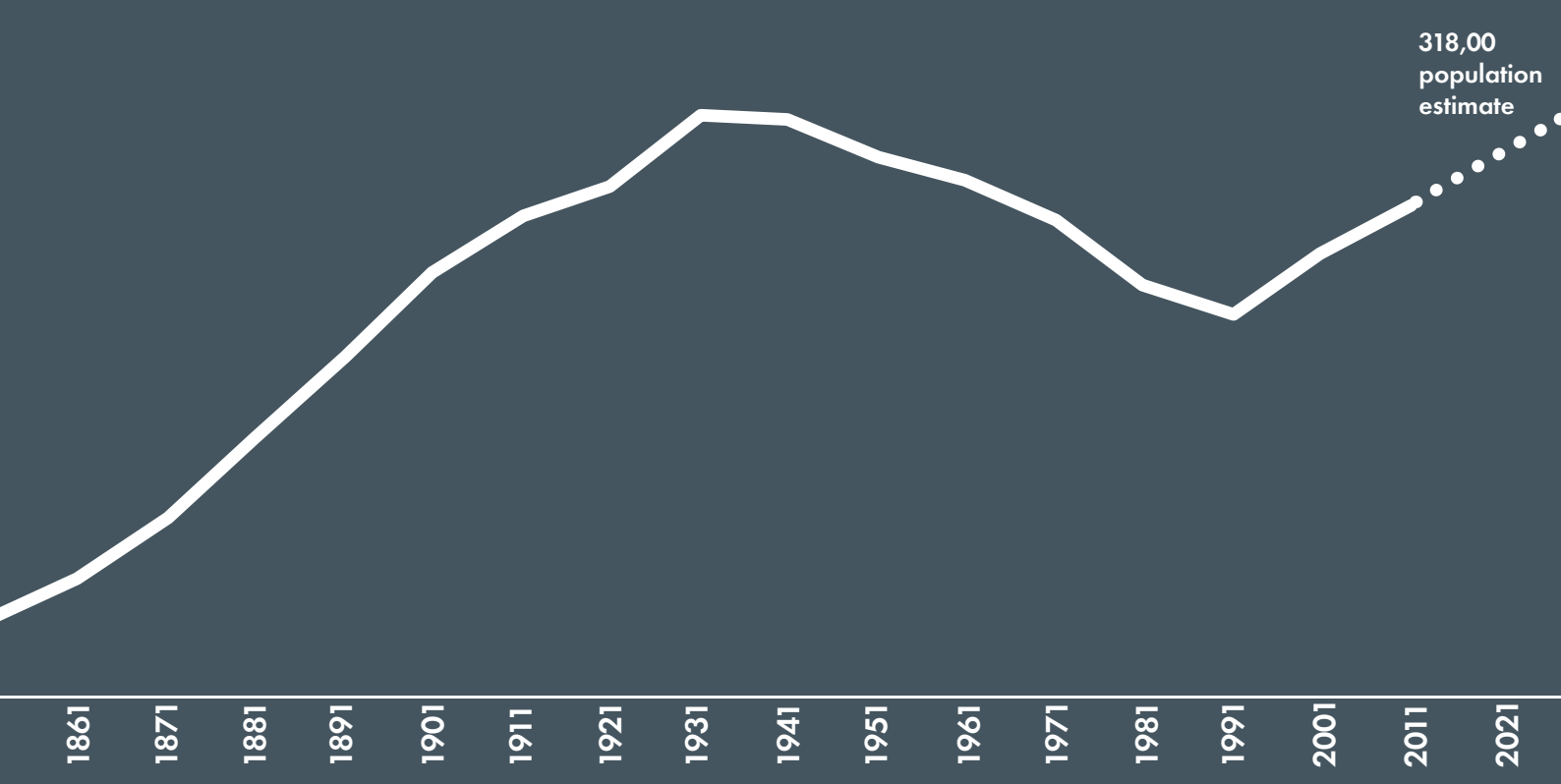
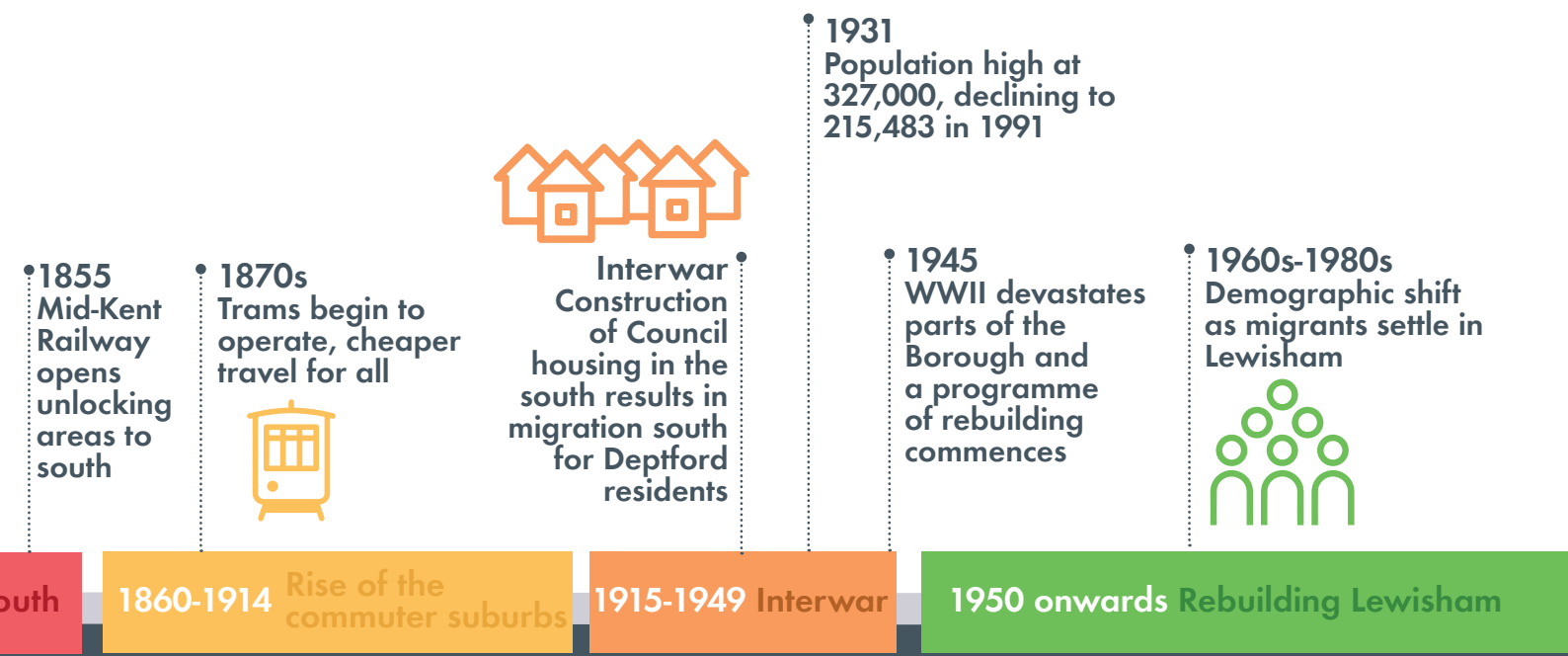


1800-1850s Unlocking the sea

Population change

The graph opposite shows population change from 1801 to 2011 (as well as the 2021 predicted growth number). The timeline above summarises the key drivers of change that have shaped Lewisham.





Pre 1700s

Ancient Lewisham

- 2.1.6 Medieval Lewisham encompassed the three parishes of St Mary Lewisham, St Margaret Lee and St Paul Deptford. Before 1700, Lewisham and Lee were comprised of a few small villages, hamlets and farmsteads set within thousands of acres of arable farmland, woodland and commonable lands.¹ The Great North Wood covered much of the Borough to the west, stretching from New Cross to just north of Croydon. Many residents were employed in woodland management, including charcoal production. The Kent highway formed part of the Roman Watling Street and linked the city of London with Canterbury and Dover. The Roman road passed through New Cross, Deptford and Blackheath.
- 2.1.7 The Ravensbourne river and its tributaries the Quaggy, the Pool and Spring Brook were principal features in the landscape and crossed through the borough to the Thames at Deptford Creek. The river was deeper than today and was used for swimming, boating and fishing.² Rural industries developed around the Ravensbourne long before the area industrialised more widely. The Domesday Book of 1086 records 11 mills along the river, half of which were probably in Lewisham village.³ Nine of these mills are thought to have survived into the 15th century, and six survived almost until modern times.⁴ The first mills ground corn, and later had various other uses, from grinding steel for weapons to tanning leather.⁵ The Lewisham Silk Mill was once the Royal Armoury and one of the foundations of the British armaments industry. It later produced gold and silver threads for fabrics and was located where Silk Mills Path meets Conington Road.⁶
- 2.1.8 The Ravensbourne joined the Thames at Deptford, which was radically different to the rural landscape of Lewisham and Lee. Deptford's position meant that it had long served as a Thameside fishing village, home to fishermen, boat-builders and river pilots.⁷ By the 17th century it was a bustling town, built upon the national significance of its Naval dockyards. The Thames had been an important trade route in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon times, enabling the transport of materials and supply of provisions to sustain London. By the 15th century, navy shipbuilding and repairing had started at Deptford along the river's banks, growing in importance in the Tudor times when Henry VIII founded his own Navy storehouse in 1513.⁸ Woodland to the south of the borough including Westwood Forest in Sydenham, part of the Great North Wood, was cut down from the 17th century to provide timber for shipbuilding.⁹
- 2.1.9 The international wars in the 16th and 17th century kept the dockyards busy and workmen employed, making the area relatively prosperous. In 1697, 692 men were employed and in 1711, 1,100 men were working in the yard which had been lengthened to cope with increasing demand for ships and repairs.¹⁰ Shops and pubs supported the growing population.
- 2.1.10 The waterways, historic views, medieval and Tudor buildings and ancient routes can be traced today and are evidence of ancient Lewisham. Place and building names are reminders of notable figures, former industries and landscape features from this period.

¹ Ideal Homes: A history of south-east London Suburbs, *London Borough of Lewisham*, <https://goo.gl/aVKLXr> (February 2018)

² Lewisham Library Service, "Rivers, canals and mills", in Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack (1980s?)

³ Ideal Homes: A history of south-east London Suburbs, *History of Lewisham*, <https://goo.gl/xNXNkM> (February 2018)

⁴ Lewisham Library Service, "Rivers, canals and mills", in Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack (1980s?)

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ British History Online, Deptford, <https://goo.gl/Q5D834> (March 2018)

⁹ Lewisham Library Service, "Sydenham", in Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack (1980s?)

¹⁰ Lewisham Library Service, "Deptford", in Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack (1980s?)

Seen



TOPOGRAPHY AND VIEWS
e.g. views towards London and out to the country are characteristic across the Borough



WATERWAYS
e.g. Thames; Ravensbourne; tributaries e.g. Quaggy, Pool and Spring Brook; and mills (some of which came later, e.g. Riverdale Mill in Lewisham which still retains its water wheel, c.1820s)



MEDIEVAL AND TUDOR BUILDINGS e.g. St. Paul's Deptford; St Margaret 15th century ragstone tower in Lee; St. Mary the Virgin; and 17th century cottages at Tanners Hill



ANCIENT ROUTES
e.g. Roman Road through New Cross, Deptford and Blackheath; and the London to Lewes Road is probably preserved in street alignments and surviving public rights of way

Hidden



BURIED ARCHAEOLOGY
e.g. site of a 15th century roadside inn at Brockley; Brockley Priory; medieval manor house of Sydenham Place, later known as Place House; buried remains of the Tudor naval storehouse at Convoy's Wharf; Sayes Court, Deptford.



PLACE & BUILDING NAMES
e.g. Pepys Estate and Evelyn ward and road (named after notable residents); Cornmill Gardens; Glass Mill Leisure Centre; Tanner's Hill (named after past rural activities); Brockley and Forest Hill (named after natural landscape features)

1700-1800

Town and country

2.1.11 In the 18th century, Deptford continued to grow as a large and thriving town, the Royal Dockyard providing jobs for sailors, shipbuilders, carpenters and ropemakers. The Dockyard was supplemented in 1650 by the Royal Navy Victualling Yards, supporting the naval and munitions operations downstream at Greenwich and Woolwich. Workers lived in small wooden cottages and wealthier residents lived in grander brick built houses.¹¹ Butt Lane was a country lane bordered with trees and gradually built up in the early 19th century when it was renamed Deptford High Street.¹²

2.1.12 The road from London to Canterbury continued to be a principal route through the borough to the city. From the early 18th century travellers using it had to pay tolls at the New Cross turnpike gate at the top of what is now Clifton Rise. The gate took its name from a nearby inn, the Golden Cross. There were three other tollgates in Lewisham - Deptford tollgate in the High Street, Lee Green tollgate in Eltham Road and Lewisham tollgate which stood near where Rennell Street meets Lewisham High Street. The income from tolls enabled the rough and muddy roads to be improved.¹³

2.1.13 By the 17th century, Lewisham village had formed at the confluence of the Ravensbourne and Quaggy rivers, with cottages clustered around St. Mary's Church and houses down the High Street.¹⁴ Lewisham village, as well as Blackheath, Sydenham and Perry Hill were increasingly popular places of residence for wealthy city merchants. Large houses were built along Lewisham High Street and at Lewisham Park. The park and one remaining house survives from the group of villas, built in 1846.¹⁵ At Sydenham, the discovery of springs of medicinal water at the site of Wells Park attracted many visitors

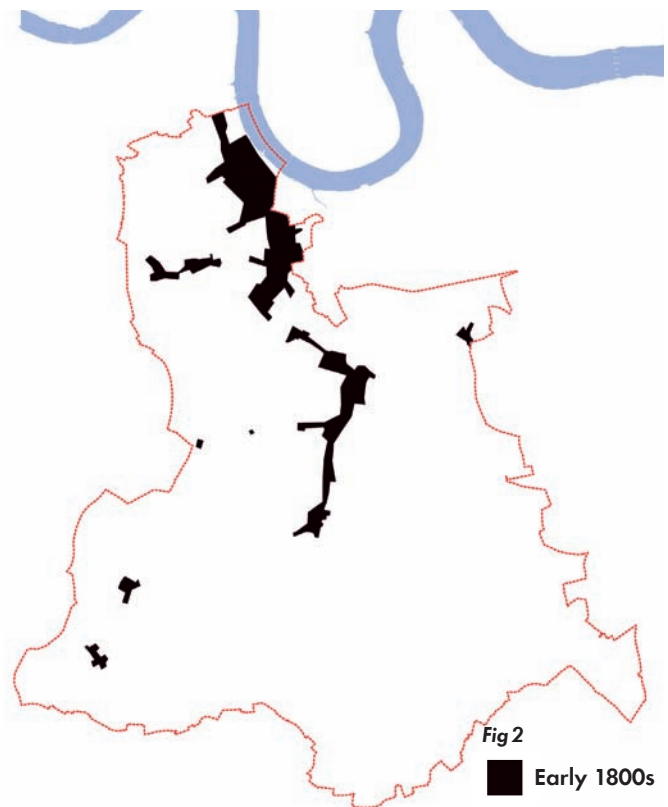
¹¹ Lewisham Library Service, "Deptford", in Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack (1980s?)

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ Lewisham Library Service, "Transport", in Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack (1980s?)

¹⁴ Ideal Homes: A history of south-east London Suburbs, *History of Lewisham*, <https://goo.gl/xNXNkM> (February 2018)

¹⁵ Lewisham Library Service, "Lewisham", in Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack (1980s?)



in the 18th century, including George III.¹⁶ In Blackheath, speculative development had taken place on the site of a hamlet known as Dowager's Bottom, near Tranquil Vale.¹⁷

2.1.14 Despite the emergence of large country houses and villas, villages were still predominantly farming communities. The countryside to the south and west remained largely forest and farmland with dispersed hamlets, like at Southend and Lee.¹⁸ Across the borough, including to the north and west of Deptford, farmland was used for market gardening and dairying providing fresh produce for London.¹⁹ Most people made their living from farming, woodland industries, market gardening, brickfields and local industries associated with the water mills.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, "Sydenham" chapter

¹⁷ Lewisham London Borough Council, *Schedule 3 - Areas of Archaeological Priority protected by Policy URB 21 Archaeology and shown on the Proposals Map*, <https://goo.gl/MeGwzU> (March 2018)

¹⁸ Lewisham Library Service, *Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack* (1980s?)

¹⁹ British History Online, Deptford, <https://goo.gl/Q5D834> (March 2018)

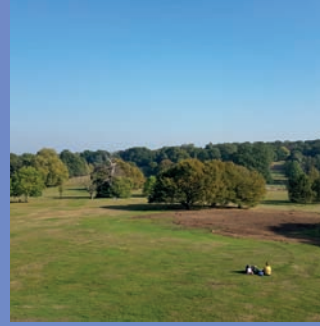
Seen



GEORGIAN TERRACES AND SMALLER HOUSES
e.g. Albury Street in Deptford



GEORGIAN VILLAS AND MANSIONS e.g. to the north of the Borough around Blackheath (e.g. 25 Dartmouth Row c.1750); and Manor House at Lee



OPEN SPACES
e.g. Beckenham Place Park established 1757/60 by John Cator; and Wells Park is remnant of Sydenham Common and named after medicinal springs enjoyed in 17th/18th century

Hidden



REMAINS OF GREEN SPACE
on former landscaped gardens
e.g. the small park on site of John Evelyn's house and gardens



GRAVES AND TOMBSTONES
e.g. at St. Margaret's in Lee



COBBLES AND GRANITE SETTS
e.g. Albury Street in Deptford; Comet Street in Deptford; and Havelock Walk at Forest Hill



PLACE & BUILDING NAMES
e.g. Silk Mills Path in Lewisham

Documented



A view of Brockley in Kent, date unknown
© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre
(with permission)

Snapshot in 1810

The map opposite shows Lewisham in 1810 before the arrival of the railways. Much of Deptford had been built up by this time, and the many mills operating between Lewisham and Catford had created a ribbon of settlement running to the east of the Ravensbourne. Pockets of growth are evident at Sydenham, Blackheath and Forest Hill, but much of the Borough remains predominantly rural. In 1801, the population of the Borough was 16,000. The next 100 years saw the population grow rapidly to 238,000 in 1901.¹



Old Tigers Head at Lee Green, 1800s
© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Lady Well from Warren's Views of the Ravensbourne (date unknown)
© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Map of Lewisham c. 1810
© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)

¹ Office for National Statistics, *Historical Census Population*, <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/historic-census-population> (March 2018)



1800s to 1850s

Unlocking the south

2.1.15 At the turn of the 19th century, Lewisham had retained much of its rural character but the area was on the cusp of change. The Lewisham Enclosure Act of 1810 permitted the development of common land and improvements in passenger transport allowed speculative building to take off.²⁰ Deptford New Town was built between 1805 and 1840 and included some ribbon development on the north side of Lewisham Way.²¹ Lee New Town was built in 1825 and two small terraces remain on Dacre Park and on Lee High Road, next to the former Swan.²²

2.1.16 The Grand Surrey Canal opened in 1807 with a branch at Deptford, supporting the growth of a variety of industries, including iron and brass foundries, breweries and potteries. The Croydon Canal opened in 1809 and ran from New Cross to Croydon via Brockley, Forest Hill and Sydenham. The canal closed to commerce in 1836 but it was used for leisure for some time after. The curved pond in Dacres Wood Nature Reserve is remnant of the canal, and the high pavement in David's Road is thought to be a former towpath. Part of the wall below the path has been rebuilt with murals depicting transport in Forest Hill.²³ The railway cutting south of New Cross Gate station is partly within the former canal cutting.

2.1.17 The canals made areas like Sydenham less isolated and supported some industry, but it was the arrival of the railways in 1838 that marked a transition to suburban life for much of Lewisham. The London and Greenwich Railway opened in 1836 and was the first railway in London with stations at New Cross and Deptford. Railway lines began to straddle the area in the 1840s and 1850s. The London to Croydon Railway opened in 1839 with stations at New Cross, Forest Hill and Sydenham. The North Kent to Gravesend line (1849) passed via Lewisham and Blackheath, the Lewisham to Beckenham

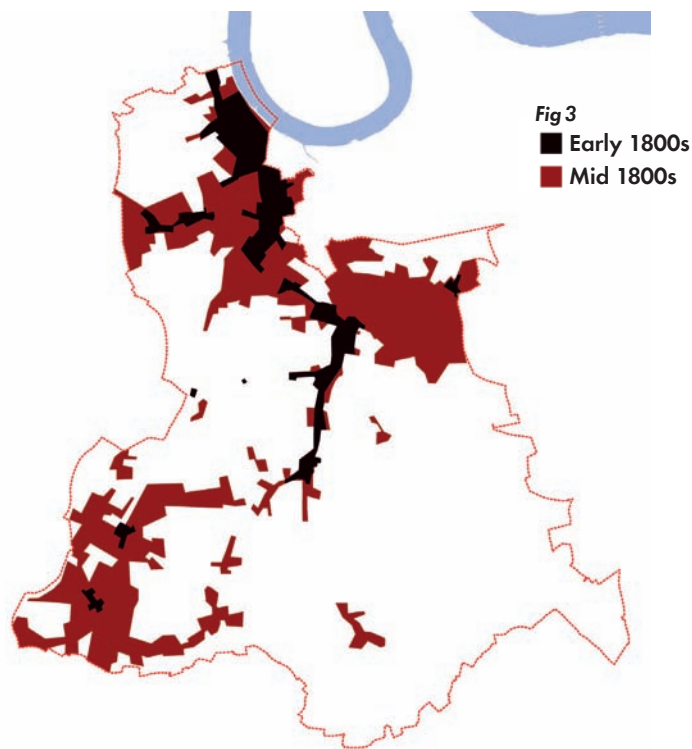


Fig 3
 ■ Early 1800s
 ■ Mid 1800s

line (1857) via Ladywell and Lower Sydenham, the Hither Green to Dartford line (1866) via Lee and the Nunhead to Shortlands line (1892) via Catford and Bellingham. The expansion of local rail lines unlocked areas of Lewisham previously untouched and made the area a desirable place to live for people who worked in central London.²⁴ However, they also brought their challenges, particularly in the area known as the Tangle in North Deptford - here, the crossing of railway lines created noisy and oddly shaped plots, impacting on the quality of development.

2.1.18 Most growth at this time was still concentrated in places like Blackheath, Forest Hill and Sydenham. The opening of the Crystal Palace in 1854 at Upper Norwood made these areas particularly fashionable, and large villas emerged to house the gentry.²⁵ The population grew from 16,000 in 1801 to 44,000 in 1851. By 1911, it had risen to 270,000, six times that of the 1850s.²⁶

²⁰ Lewisham London Borough Council, *Lewisham Borough Wide Character Study Part 2* (2010), p 30

²¹ Lewisham London Borough Council, *Brockley conservation area character appraisal*, <https://goo.gl/8vWPF3> (2005)

²² <https://runner500.wordpress.com/2015/02/26/lee-new-town-victorian-servants-housing/>

²³ Lewisham Library Service, "Rivers, canals and mills", in *Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack* (1980s?)

²⁴ Lewisham Library Service, "Rivers, canals and mills", in *Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack* (1980s?)

²⁵ *ibid.* "Forest Hill" chapter.

²⁶ Office for National Statistics, *Historical Census Population*, <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/historic-census-population> (March 2018)

Seen



REGENCY
e.g. 81-85 Dacre Park in Lee



EARLY 19TH CENTURY
e.g. Belmont Hill (example above); 1-4 Eliot Vale (1858); Sydenham Hill; Eliot Bank; Belmont Grove.



REMNANTS OF VICTORIAN NEW TOWNS
e.g. Deptford New Town north of St. John's station and east of Friendly Street, including Admiral Street (photo above shows 31-33 Admiral Street), Strickland Street and parts of Albyn Road. Remnants of Lee New Town exist at Dacre Park and on Lee High Road.



RAILWAYS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE
e.g. station buildings and platforms; carriage ramps; signal boxes; bridges; viaducts and tunnels (particularly at Deptford)

Hidden



PLACE & BUILDING NAMES
e.g. Surrey Canal Road named after the canal which opened in 1807



BLUE / MAROON PLAQUES
recording some of the Borough's notable residents



COBBLES / GRANITE SETTS
e.g. at Forest Hill and Albury Street in Deptford



CANALS
e.g. pond at Dacres Wood Nature Reserve and the mural and high wall marking former tow path on David's Road

Documented



Deptford and the Greenwich Railway from the Surrey Canal, 1840
There were windmills at Deptford and Blackheath at this time.
© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Road from Blackheath to Lewisham in 1823
© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)

1860 to 1914

Rise of the commuter suburbs

2.1.19 Houses, shops and services quickly grew up around train stations, transforming quiet country areas into commuter suburbs. The arrival of many new forms of road transport served the emerging patchwork of Victorian streets and made suburban lifestyle more appealing and convenient.²⁷ This included horse-drawn, steam and later electric and diesel powered transport, trams, carriages and omnibuses. Bicycles were also commonplace after the 1880s. Thomas Tilling operated many bus routes in the borough and had a bus depot in Old Road, Lee.²⁸ Regular tram services began in the 1870s and were first routed from East Greenwich to New Cross Gate via Deptford, and later to Catford via Lewisham. Cheaper fares attracted a population of working class commuters in the 1880s and 1890s, and by 1907, trams had been electrified and had extended to Lee, Brockley, Forest Hill and down to Southend and Grove Park.²⁹

2.1.20 Extensive developments took place at New Cross around Hatcham and Telegraph Hill, as well as filling parcels at Brockley, Lee and St. John's. Houses were laid out at Catford and Hither Green. Houses were built in all shapes and sizes as the demographics of Lewisham broadened; over time, large villas were gradually replaced by terraces and semi-detached houses. The Edwardian era saw areas of planned street network built out by many different developers, sometimes in planned groups, but more typically houses have a strongly individual feel, reflecting a fragmented pattern of development.³⁰

2.1.21 At Deptford, heavy industry moved in to capitalise on cheap labour and good transport links. Deptford had relied heavily on the Royal Dockyards, which itself was dependent on the state of international affairs, and so peaceful times and the growth in size of ships led to the closure of private yards in the 19th century. The Royal Dockyards closed in 1869.³¹

²⁷ London Transport Museum, *Growth of Suburbia*, <https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/visit/museum-guide> (March, 2018)

²⁸ Lewisham Library Service, "Transport", in *Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack* (1980s?)

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ Lewisham London Borough Council, *Lewisham Borough Wide Character Study Part 2* (2010), p 30

³¹ Lewisham Library Service, "Deptford", in *Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack* (1980s?)

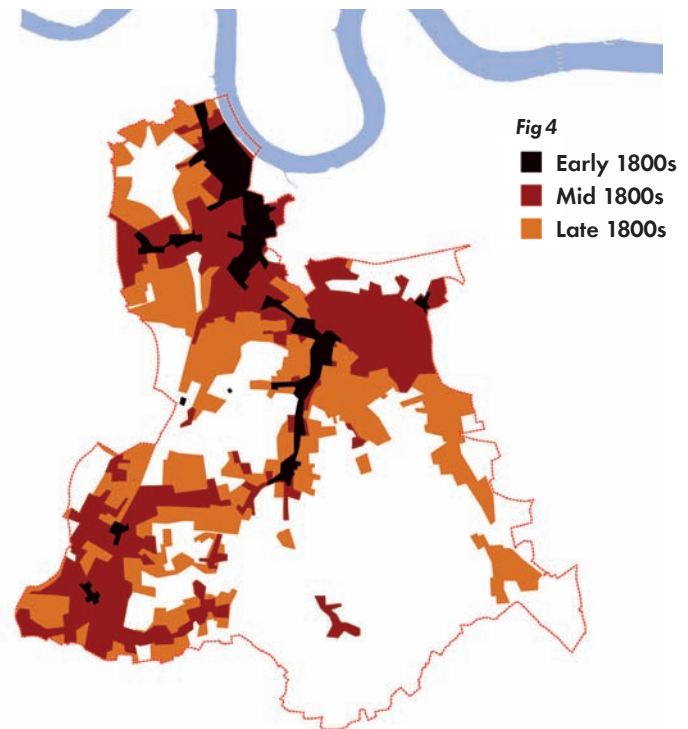


Fig 4

■ Early 1800s
 ■ Mid 1800s
 ■ Late 1800s

2.1.22 Shopping parades emerged at local centres to serve the new and growing communities. Music halls, cinemas, schools, hospitals and libraries were also built at this time, as well as workhouses and almshouses to support the poor and elderly (for example Grove Park Workhouse and Thackeray's Almshouses in Lewisham, c.1860). The Horniman Museum (1901) and Lewisham Hippodrome (1912) provided entertainment and leisure. Nurseries and allotment gardens were common and public parks such as Sydenham Recreation Ground (now Mayow Park) provided amenity and recreational space. Sport was a big passion in Lewisham. Blackheath had a prominent role in rugby, hockey and golf with some of the oldest clubs in England and by 1900, county cricket was regularly played at Catford. Open spaces gave ample room for dozens of sports grounds.³² An array of clubs and societies provided residents with a means to better themselves. Evening classes, discussion groups, amateur dramatic societies and groups connected to local churches were common.³³

³² Coulter, J., *A Century of Lewisham* (The History Press, 2007) p. 15

³³ *ibid.*

Seen



MID 19TH CENTURY
e.g. 1 Eliot Hill; Eliot cottages (1860); and 5-8 Grotes Place (image above)



LATE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN RESIDENTIAL
e.g. Gillian Street in Ladywell (1890s); and Earlsthorpe Road in Sydenham (early 1900s)



CIVIC AND CULTURAL BUILDINGS
e.g. Museums e.g. Horniman Museum (1901); Libraries e.g. Torridon Road Library (1907), Forest Hill Library (1901), former Deptford Central Library (1910-1914); Ladywell Public baths (1884); Grade II listed former Deptford Police Station (1912); Lee Fire Station (1906)



PUBLIC PARKS
e.g. Mayow Park opened in 1878 as Sydenham Recreation Ground; Ladywell Fields (1889)

Hidden



MEWS, OTHER STABLING AND INDUSTRIAL REMNANTS
e.g. at Havelock Walk in Forest Hill, built between 1870 and 1896



PLACE & BUILDING NAMES
e.g. Margaret McMillan Park was named after a healthcare and 'early years' education pioneer who lived in Lewisham between 1910-1913.

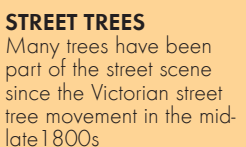


GHOST SIGNS
There are numerous signs across the Borough offering reminders of past businesses, for example this sign in Forest Hill



Lawrie Park Avenue in Sydenham by Pissaro (1871)
National Gallery

Many elements of Pissaro's painting can still be seen today



STREET TREES
Many trees have been part of the street scene since the Victorian street tree movement in the mid-late 1800s

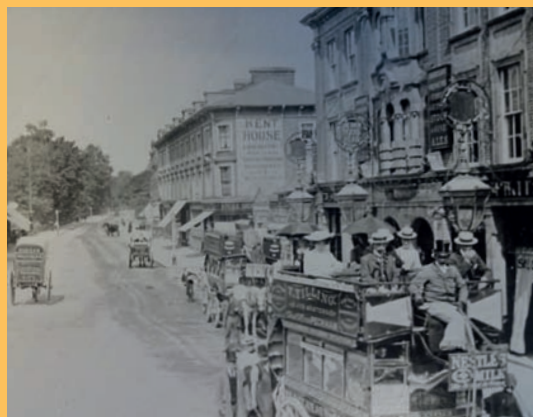
Documented



Lee High Road, 1903



Bricklaying class at Goldsmiths, c 1899



Lee Green in about 1905. The photograph shows a Thomas Tilling horsebus, en-route from Blackheath to Eltham.



New Cross Station, 1913



Hay-making in Brockley

1915 to 1949 Interwar

2.1.23 The housing shortage after the First World War prompted the building of working class housing on an unprecedented scale by London County Council (LCC) and Lewisham Council. The 'Homes fit for Heroes' campaign helped to establish an important new social principle of housing as a social service.³⁴ Local authority provision of housing increased dramatically in the interwar period, particularly to the south of the borough. The construction of Bellingham Estate by the LCC in 1923 provided 2,700 homes and had a green and spacious quality. Downham Estate was built between 1924 and 1930 and Grove Park estate was constructed by Lewisham Council between 1926 and 1929.³⁵ Tenants were drawn from overcrowded Deptford, Bermondsey and Rotherhithe. In the 1920s, 50,000 people moved from these places to the south of Lewisham: "*Lewisham had long been a promised land for ambitious families from those areas [Deptford, Bermondsey and Rotherhithe], the migration south being a visible sign that they had bettered themselves*".³⁶

2.1.24 The population peaked in 1931 as the electrification of the railways made it easier and cheaper for workers to commute into the city to work. Suburban homes offered a more comfortable lifestyle. Advertising campaigns by London's railway companies enticed people to move to the outer parts of the city, including Lewisham, described by one advert as 'A Suburban Centre' in 1923.³⁷ The large parks and open spaces, as well as the plentiful leisure and recreational activities were part of the attraction. By 1930, there were over 20 cinemas in Lewisham. By 2001, all the cinemas had gone, and Lewisham was one of a few boroughs in London without one.³⁸

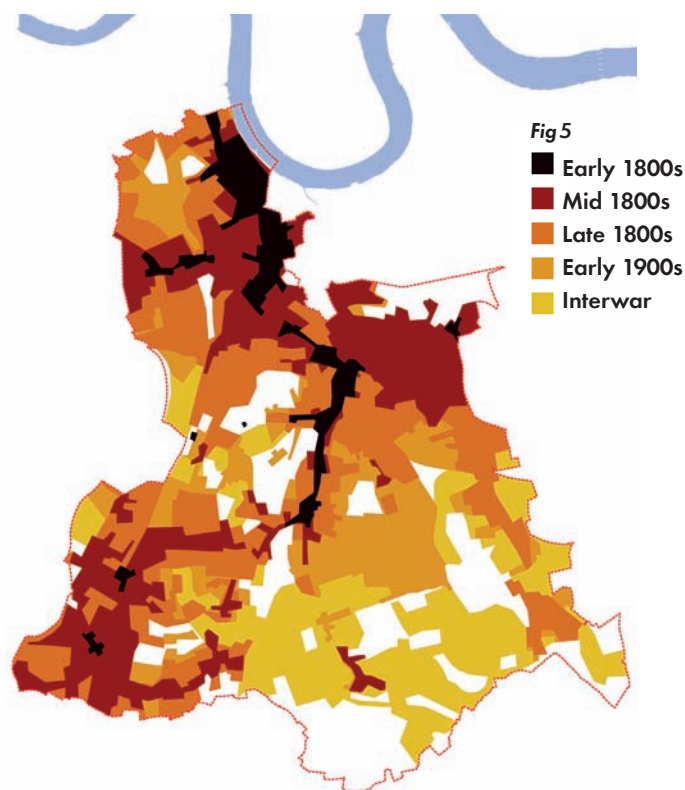
³⁴ Social Housing History, *Homes Fit for Heroes*, <https://goo.gl/7b567D> (March 2018)

³⁵ Lewisham London Borough Council, *Lewisham Borough Wide Character Study Part 2* (2010), p 38

³⁶ Rubinstein, A., *Just Like the Country: Memories of London families who settled in the new cottage estates, 1919-1939* (Age Exchange, 1991)

³⁷ London Transport Museum, *Growth of Suburbia*, <https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/visit/museum-guide> (March, 2018)

³⁸ Lewisham's Lost Cinemas, <https://goo.gl/hNKy5y> (March 2018)



2.1.25 Bomb damage during WWII transformed the character of the borough forever and parts of Georgian and Victorian Lewisham were destroyed or damaged beyond repair. The area around the docks and former naval yards, as well as Lewisham town centre were heavily bombed, but the bombing was indiscriminate and no area completely avoided damage.

2.1.26 Many of Deptford's factories did not survive the damage and disruption of WWII. Industry moved out of the area with consequent unemployment, depopulation and increased poverty³⁹. A southwards shift occurred as wealthier residents in Lewisham migrated to leafier suburbs.⁴⁰

³⁹ Lewisham Library Service, "Deptford", in *Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack (1980s?)*

⁴⁰ *ibid*, "Lewisham" chapter

Seen



LCC INTERWAR HOUSING
e.g. Downham estate; Bellingham estate



LEWISHAM COUNCIL HOUSING
e.g. Grove Park



PARKS
e.g. Chinbrook Meadows (opened to public in 1929)



CIVIC, CULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS
e.g. 1920s commercial building on Lewisham High Street and in Catford Town Centre

Hidden



WAR MEMORIALS AND GRAVES e.g. at St. Stephen's Church, Lewisham. There are many across the Borough: <http://lewishamwarmemorials.wikidot.com/info:map>



WWII SHELTER SIGNS
e.g. Dartmouth Road, Forest Hill



WWII STEEL STRETCHERS USED AS RAILINGS
Mereton Mansions

Documented



Bomb damage in Lewisham town centre © Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Last market garden in Deptford © Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)

Air Raid Warden's Control Point at Deptford © Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Memories of wartime Lewisham

"The Anti Aircraft 'Ack Ack' battery on Hilly Fields or the Barrage Balloon at Blythe Hill, picking up shrapnel, the blitzed houses just round the corner from Gran and Grandpa, the cleared bomb site with the (EWS) Emergency Water Supply tank on the corner of Ewhurst and Crofton Park Roads, men from the council cutting down everyone's garden railings to build tanks for the army, 'so they said', were the things that impacted on the mind of a small child that there 'was a war on'." - John Roger

WW2 People's War, *The period of 'My War'*, <https://goo.gl/nLT63d> (contributed in October 2014, accessed March 2018)

1950s onwards

Rebuilding Lewisham

2.1.27 Heavy bomb damage led to a radical strategy for rebuilding homes and streets, governed by the LCC's County of London Plan of 1943. Both the LCC and Lewisham Council were responsible for building housing estates which accelerated in the 1950s when the first tower blocks and blocks began to emerge. The Passfields estate at Daneswood Avenue, Catford, is a notable work by the modernist architects Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew; the homes were built in 1949-50 on a site that had been acquired and cleared by the Council before the war. During the 1960s and after, there has been a continued desire to experiment with new architectural and urban forms, for example at Walter's Way - 1980s self-build housing in collaboration with pioneering architect Walter Segal. More recently, conversion and refurbishment projects are housing the growing population, as well as more conventional street-based schemes such as PLACE/Ladywell designed by RSH + Partners.⁴¹

2.1.28 The Metropolitan Borough of Lewisham merged with Deptford in 1965 to form one single borough, at a time when Deptford was one of the poorest areas in London. Industry was rapidly moving out which had resulted in growing unemployment.⁴² At the same time, migrants began to settle in Lewisham, including those from the Caribbean who came to work in hospitals and on the railways and elsewhere. The period from the 1960s to 1980s saw a significant demographic shift in the borough, and there is now a large west African population, and more recently, Welsh, Irish, Italian and German residents.⁴³

2.1.29 The diversity of residents is a noticeable strength, but the great influx of migrants in the post-war period led to race tensions. Perhaps the most famous example was the 'Battle of Lewisham' in 1977, where 500 members of the far-right National Front attempted to march from New Cross to Lewisham but were thwarted by various counter-demonstrations. The borough has experienced several landmark

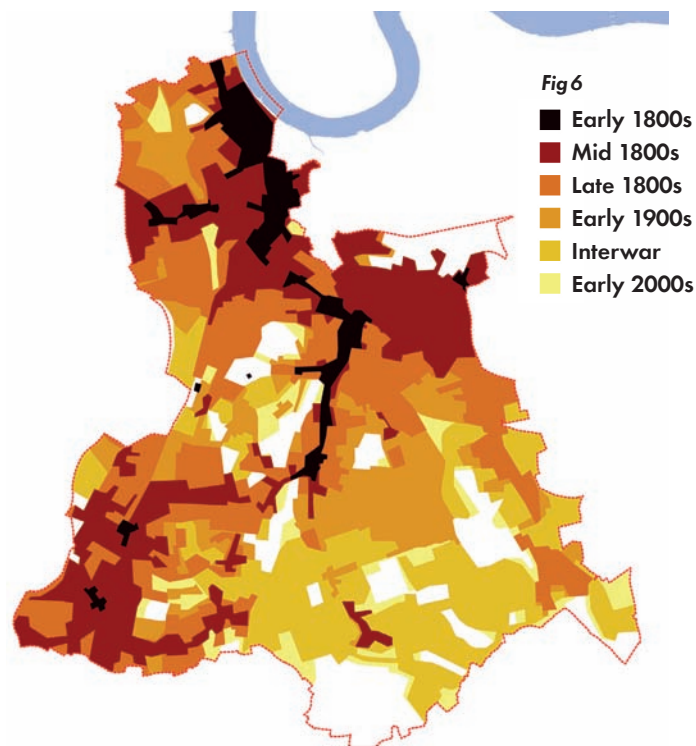


Fig 6

- Early 1800s
- Mid 1800s
- Late 1800s
- Early 1900s
- Interwar
- Early 2000s

struggles against racism, which have "shaped the collective consciousness of the borough and embedded a tradition of solidarity".⁴⁴

2.1.30 Art students moved to Deptford estates in the 1980s to work in the area, becoming a source of culture and local innovation. They set up shops and businesses and have contributed to the regeneration of Deptford.⁴⁵ As modern housing developments are lining the waterways, particularly in and around Deptford like at Plough Way, new cultural and educational facilities have opened too, for example the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in Deptford. Today, the borough hosts one of the fastest growing communities of creatives in London.⁴⁶ The historic institution Goldsmiths, founded in 1891, has grown in importance as the Borough seeks to harness its knowledge base. The institution attracts a diverse student body and will continue to have a prominent role in shaping the future character of Lewisham.

⁴¹ Lewisham London Borough Council, *Lewisham Borough Wide Character Study Part 2* (2010), p 40 and p 42

⁴² Lewisham Library Service, "Deptford", in *Looking back at Lewisham: A local history information pack (1980s?)*

⁴³ White, B. W., *Intercultural Cities: Policy and Practice for a New Era* (2018)

⁴⁴ White, B. W., *Intercultural Cities: Policy and Practice for a New Era* (2018) p. 218

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Lewisham London Borough Council, *Support for creatives*, <https://goo.gl/DQZXdQ> (March, 2018)

Seen



POST-WAR HOUSING ESTATES

e.g. Estate at Daneswood Avenue (1949); Lammas Green at Sydenham Hill (1955), Chinbrook estate (pictured, planned by LCC in 1961); The Excalibur Estate in Downham (1940s pre-fabricated housing, with 6 properties now listed)



1960s/1970s TOWER BLOCKS

e.g. Pepys Estate at Deptford (by LCC between 1963-66); and blocks of flats at Lewisham, Sydenham and Brockley Park



1980s/1990s HOUSING

e.g. Dressington Avenue, Ladywell



21ST CENTURY BUILDINGS

e.g. Surrey Quays; Plough Way; and Trinity Laban Centre in Deptford

Hidden



REUSED AND REFURBISHED BUILDINGS

e.g. the refurbished Forest Hill Baths (image above); the Horniman Museum; Lewisham Arthouse (formerly Deptford Central Library); Laurie Grove Baths; former Deptford Police Station (now artists studios)



STREET ART / MURALS

depicting local social histories and contributing to local character



Lewisham market in 1970s

DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

shops, markets, businesses and people reflecting the Borough's multicultural heritage

Photo © Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)

Documented



Bellingham Lido in 1969

© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)

Heritage Themes

2.1.31 The historical research undertaken and informal discussions with local residents have helped to inform a number of overarching, spatial heritage themes which have influenced the character of Lewisham today. These are outlined on the following pages.

Views and topography

- 2.1.32 Panoramas, elevated views and long views towards the city are common around the borough, from Forest Hill to Blythe Hill Fields to Blackheath
- 2.1.33 Views have significance because communities have identified with them or because they are of, or from, notable historic landmarks.



View towards the city from Horniman Gardens



Blythe Hill Fields - view to the city



View towards the city from Brockley View

Sport and open space

- 2.1.34 Lewisham has an impressive sporting history. Blackheath had a prominent role in rugby, hockey and golf hosting some of the oldest clubs in England. By 1900, county cricket was regularly played at Catford and W. G. Grace, a renowned cricketer, lived in Sydenham.
- 2.1.35 From the Catford Wanderers to ladies' cricket in the 1920s, as well as numerous football teams, the Laurie Grove Baths and Lee Cycling Club, the borough has shown a long-standing commitment to sport. The former Catford Greyhound Stadium is commemorated in the recent painting on the bridge walls by Catford station.
- 2.1.36 The open spaces in the south gave ample room for dozens of sports grounds and continue to provide places of recreation for residents. The borough boasts a wide variety of open spaces, from the Heath in the north to the river corridor and its floodfields in the centre, as well as the numerous municipal parks and London Squares found across the borough.

All historic images © Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Bellingham open-air swimming pool in the 1970s (the lido operated from 1920s to 1980s)



Photos showing the variety of green space across the borough

Rivers and railway

- 2.1.37 The earliest settlements were focused around Lewisham's waterways, particularly the Thames and River Ravensbourne. The construction of the Grand Surrey Canal and the Croydon Canal in the early 1800s made areas like Sydenham less isolated and encouraged industry.
- 2.1.38 Advances in transport accelerated industrialisation and population growth. The first passenger railway in London ran through the borough with stations at Deptford and New Cross. Local railway expansion in the 1840s and 1850s transformed rural communities into commuter towns.
- 2.1.39 The physical interventions also changed the landscape considerably. Railways, roads and their associated infrastructure sliced through parts of the borough. The London Bridge to Deptford railway, for example, was carried on a viaduct of 878 arches, part of which is Grade II Listed. The railways are linear divisions in the landscape between the east and west. A notable example is 'the tangle', which is a triangle of rail lines to the north of New Cross Road dominated by rail infrastructure.
- 2.1.40 Today there are 22 railway and DLR stations in the borough.



East London Line train at Surrey Canal junction



Deptford High Street and station, 1968



Shunter at Sydenham gas-works between the war



Ladywell Bridge in 1864

All historic images © Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)

Urban and suburban

2.1.41 The Borough embodies a transition from inner London to outer London. There is a general gradient of development from the oldest development in the north, to mid to late Victorian in the centre and to the west, and to more recent development in the south-east.

- 20th century suburbs
- Victorian Suburbs
- Victorian Entrepreneurship
- Georgian Planning and Growth

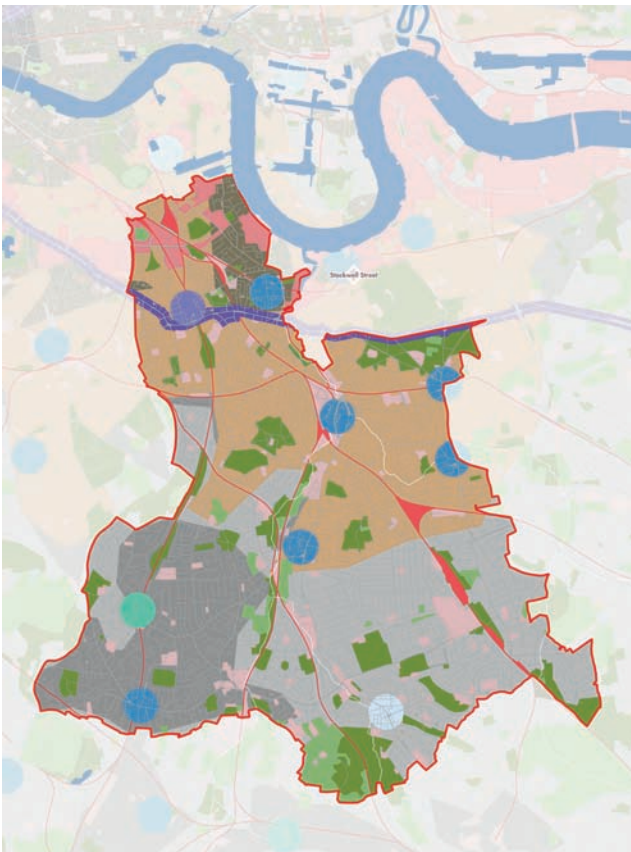


Fig 7 An extract of the borough from our wider study for Historic England about London's character and growth



Georgian housing at Blackheath, c.1790



Victorian housing at Catford, c. late 1890s



Inter-war public sector housing. drawing heavily on Garden City principles in the south of the borough in Bellingham



Grove Park, c.1920s

2.2 LEWISHAM'S SOCIETY TODAY

2.2.1 The following pages present an overview of Lewisham's socio-economic profile. The summary is provided alongside spatial data which enables a better understanding of trends and relationships between places. This refocuses the study towards the people that live in the borough and can help to target future development or investment.

2.2.2 Maps in the report are based on data taken from the 2011 Census unless stated otherwise. This is the last set of data that allows us to map trends spatially.

Population numbers

2.2.3 Lewisham is the 13th largest borough in London and the fifth largest in inner London by population, with a population of around 292,000 (Mid-year estimate, ONS, 2014). The fastest growing areas are Lewisham Central, Rushey Green (Catford), New Cross and Evelyn (Deptford) wards.

Deprivation

2.2.4 The map opposite shows Indices of Multiple Deprivation data (2015) which measures relative levels of deprivation at LSOA level. Lewisham ranks as the 48th most deprived of all 326 local authorities, placing it in the 20% most deprived areas in England. The maps on the adjacent page show deprivation data by various deciles. Lewisham has the highest proportion of children and young people (29.6%) and older people (25.7%) in economic deprivation in England.

2.2.5 Pockets of deprivation are spread throughout the borough, but the areas of the highest deprivation are found in Evelyn, Lewisham Central, Rushey Green, Whitefoot, and Bellingham wards.

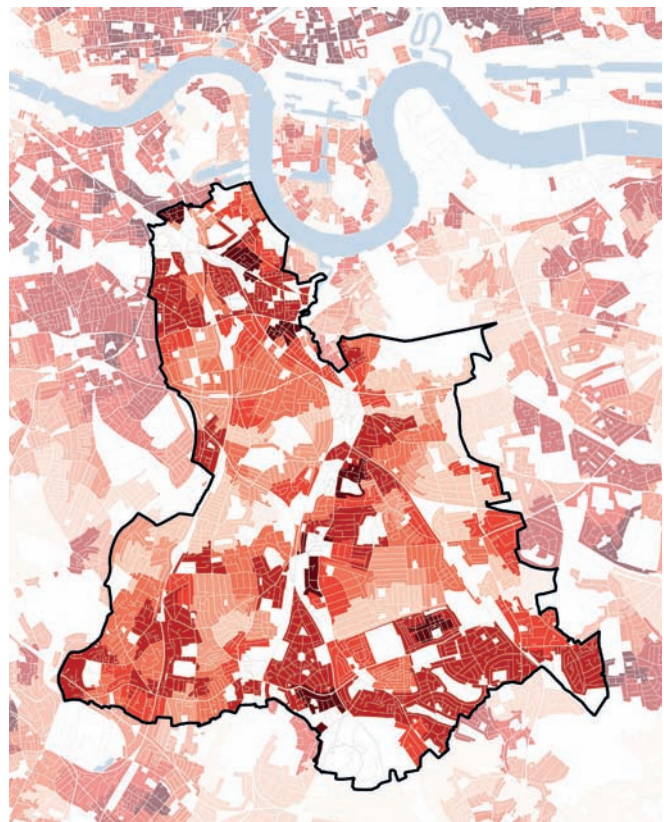
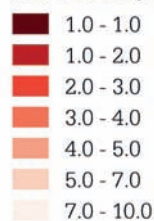
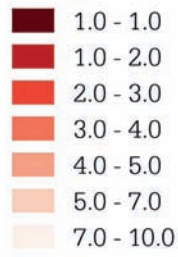


Fig 8 IMD mapping

IMD Decile (where 1 is most deprived 10% of LSOAs)





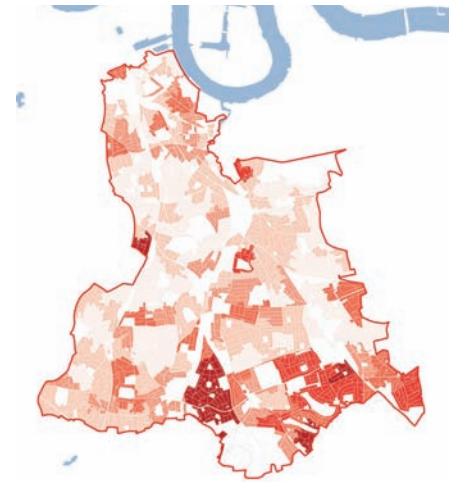
Living environment decile



Crime decile



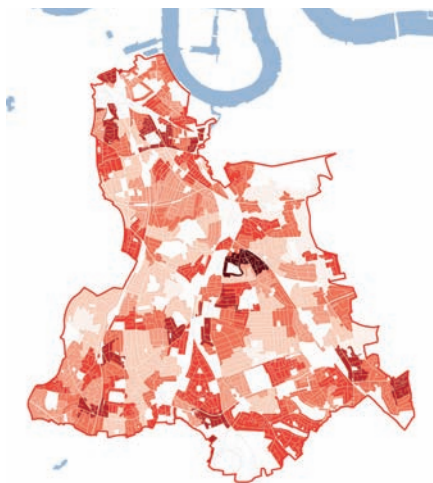
Barriers to Housing and Services decile



Education, Skills and Training decile



Employment decile



Health Deprivation and Disability decile



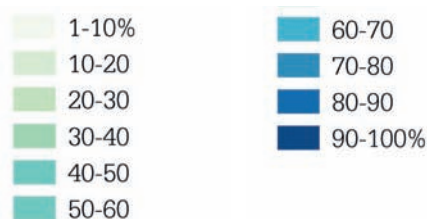
Income decile

Employment and jobs

- 2.2.6 Levels of economic inactivity are relatively consistent across the borough, but are higher around Deptford, Forest Hill, Bellingham and Grove Park.
- 2.2.7 70% of residents travel outside of the borough for work. The borough is well located for access to central London but also south to Croydon and Gatwick.
- 2.2.8 Local businesses are predominantly small or SME and create a demand for local office space.
- 2.2.9 The main sectors in the borough are public administration and health. Other significant sectors include retail, business services and construction, with a small but growing creative sector clustered around Goldsmiths.



Fig 9 Economically inactive



Population density

2.2.10 The town centres tend to be higher density, particularly at Lewisham, Deptford, and Catford. The two pockets of highest density are the newly developed Plough Way, and the council estate around Abinger Grove, which are different to each other in typology and character; this demonstrates that higher density can be achieved in a variety of ways.

2.2.11 Over the next 20 years the borough is expected to see the second fastest rate of growth in inner London. This map is based on data taken from the 2011 Census and recent growth in areas such as Lewisham Town Centre, Catford and in North Deptford are not illustrated on this plan.

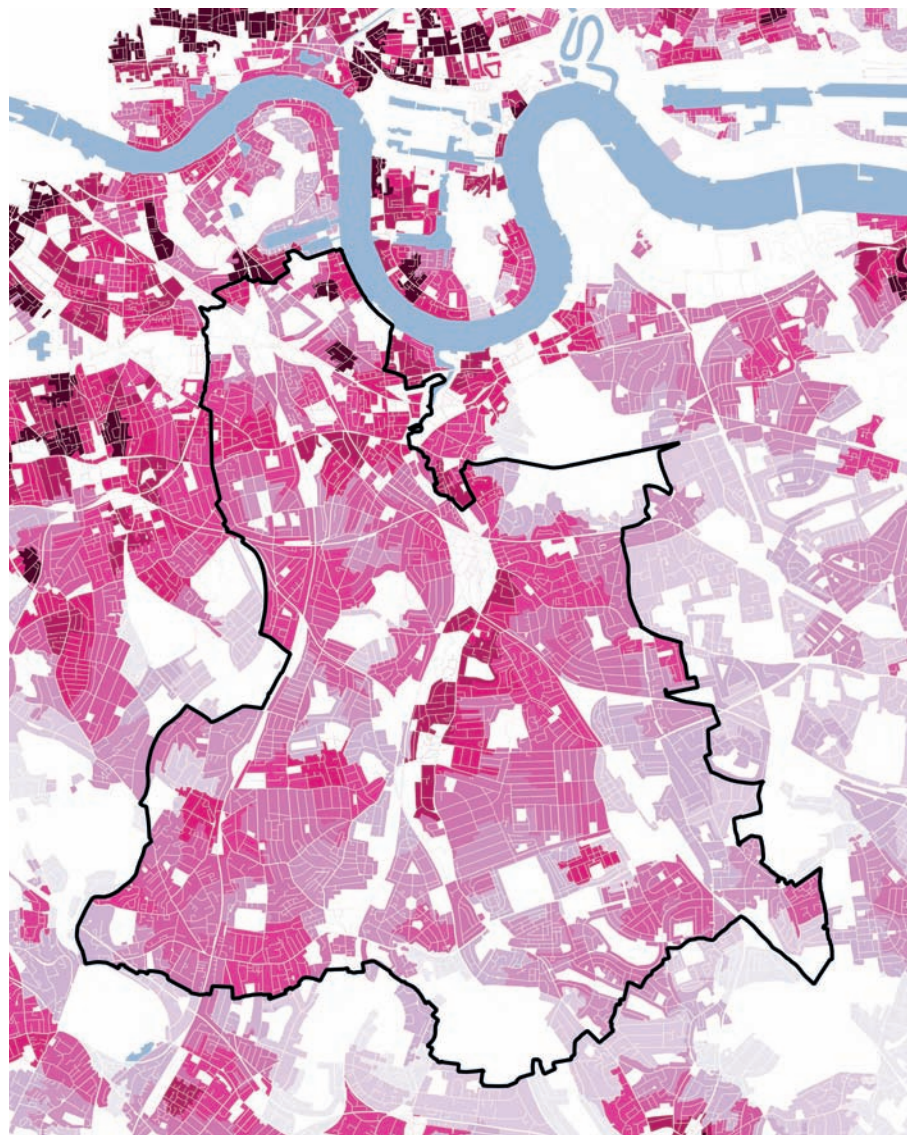
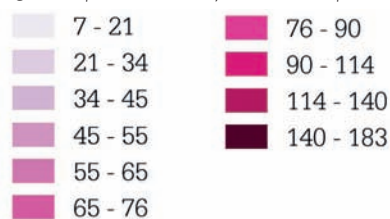


Fig 10 Population density (number of persons per hectare)



Ethnicity

- 2.2.12 Lewisham is the 15th most ethnically diverse local authority in England, and two out of every five residents are from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background.
- 2.2.13 The largest BME groups are Black African and Black Caribbean and the age profile of the BME groups is younger than that of the White groups.
- 2.2.14 Forty-six per cent of Lewisham residents are of black and minority ethnic heritage, but this rises to just over 76% among school children.
- 2.2.15 The maps opposite show the distribution of ethnicity across the borough. Unlike other inner city boroughs like Hackney, Lewisham's diversity is spread evenly across the borough and there isn't one ethnicity that is especially concentrated in a particular area.

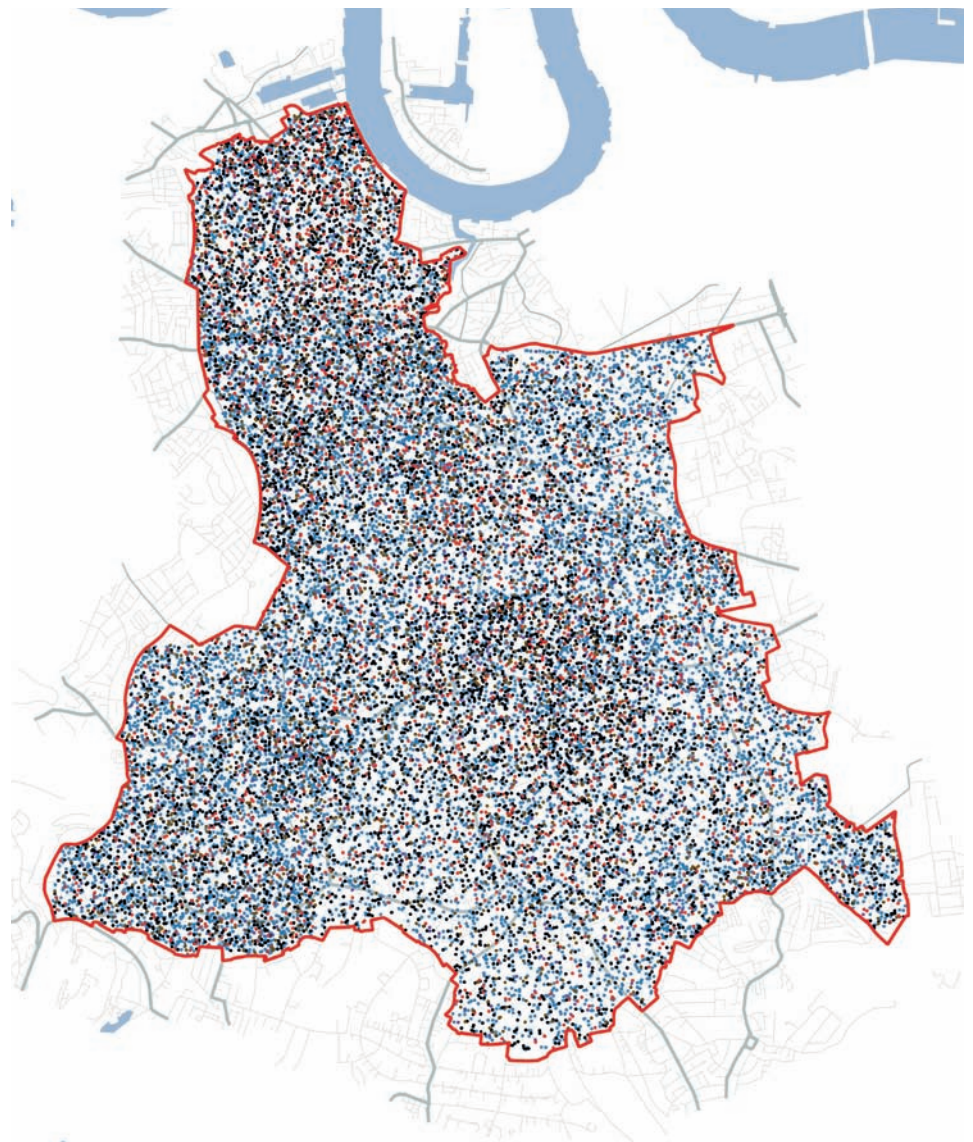
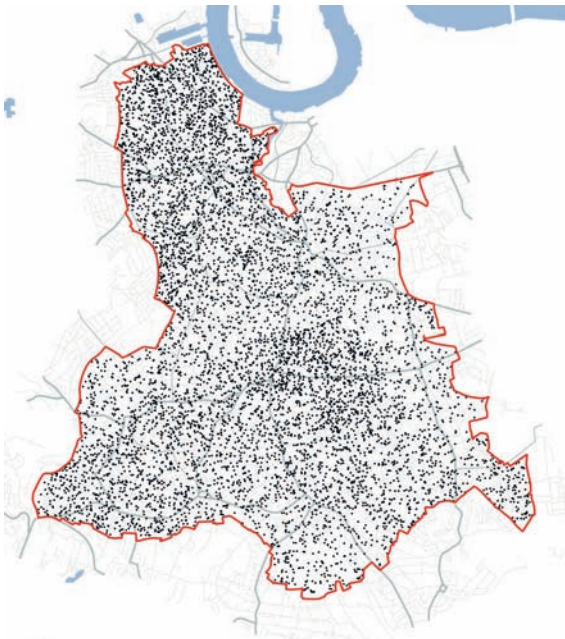
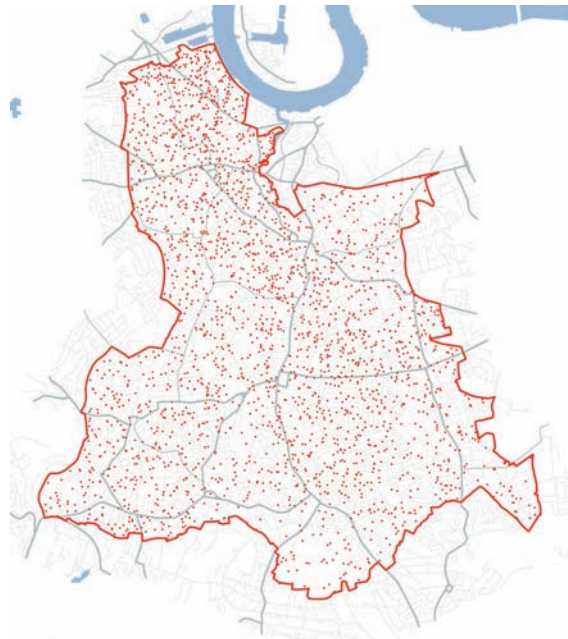


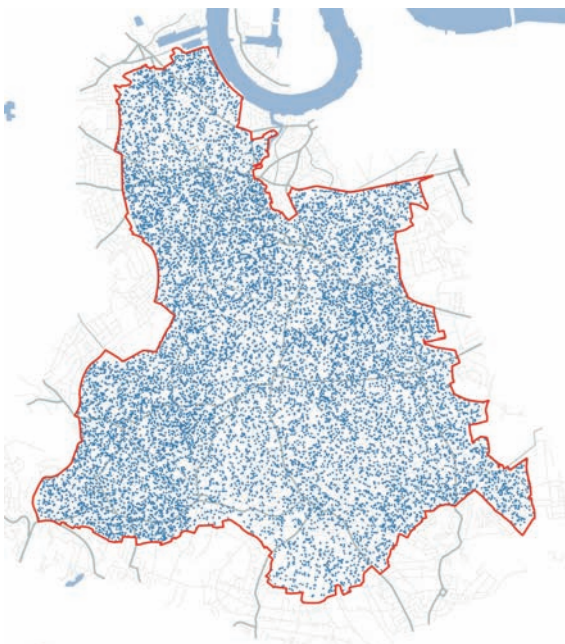
Fig 11 Ethnicity mapping - above - all ethnicities



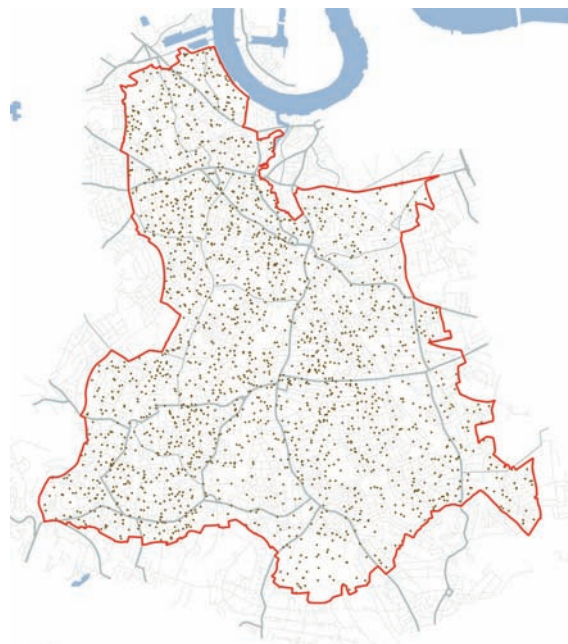
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British



Asian/Asian British



White



Mixed/multiple ethnic group

Car ownership

2.2.16 The adjacent map shows that there is higher car ownership in the south east of the borough, with lowest levels to the north in Deptford and along the western edge.

2.2.17 This aligns closely with levels of public transport accessibility. Areas with highest car ownership are areas with the poorest PTAL ratings.

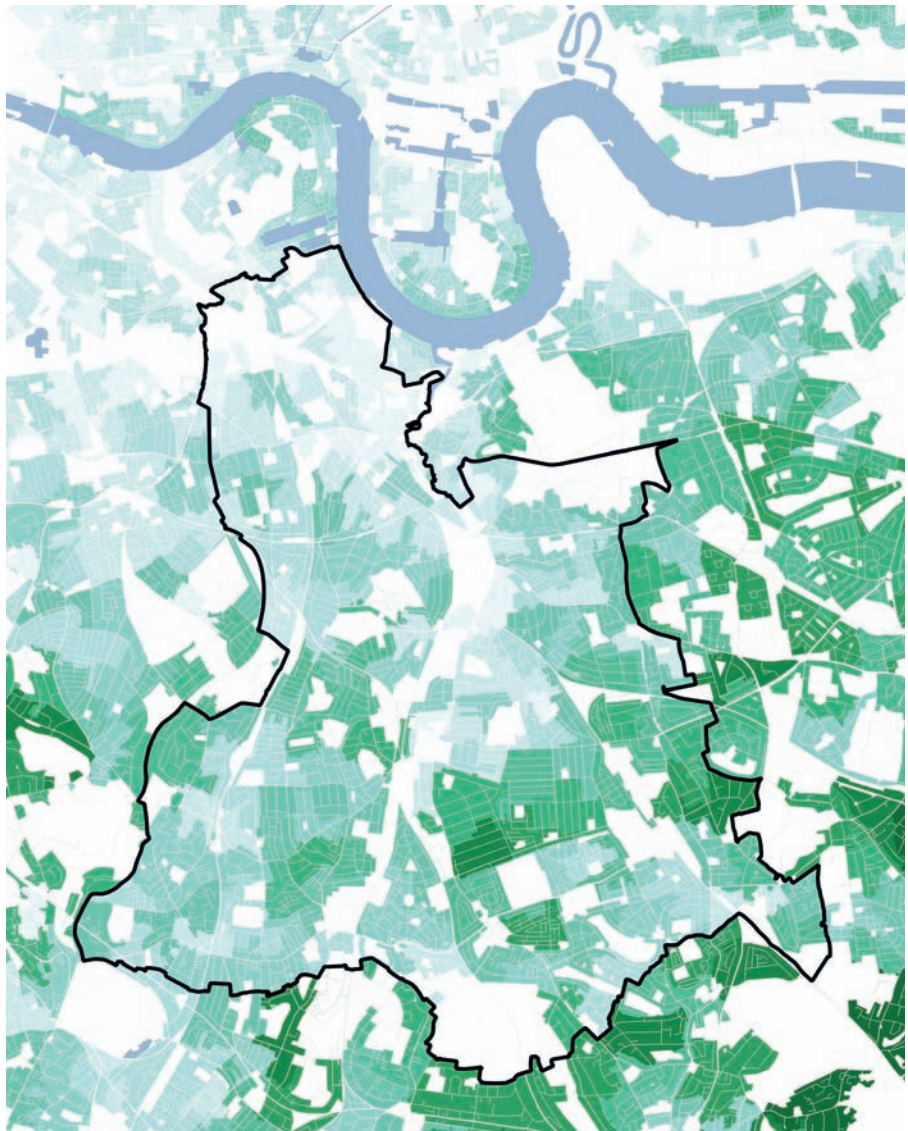
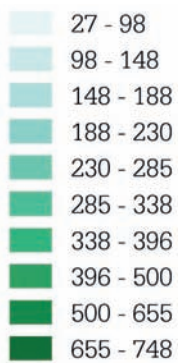


Fig 12 2 or more cars or vans in household

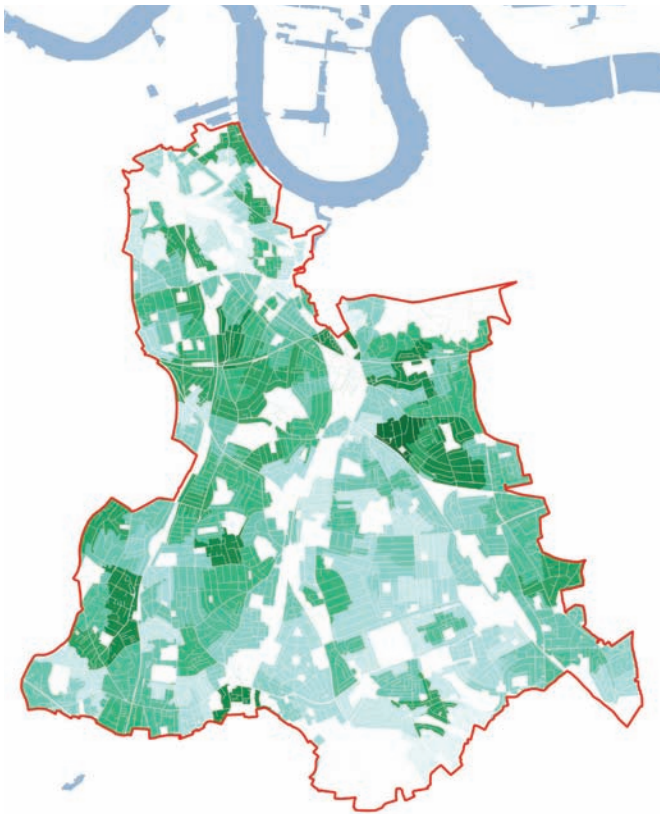


Fig 13 2 - 4 people in household

Household size

2.2.18 The maps above illustrate the size of households across the borough demonstrating that there are clusters of larger households in the centre of the borough in some of the larger homes in Catford, Bellingham and Downham. The maps do also show areas of larger homes that have a lower occupation such as at Hither Green and to the west of Forest Hill station.

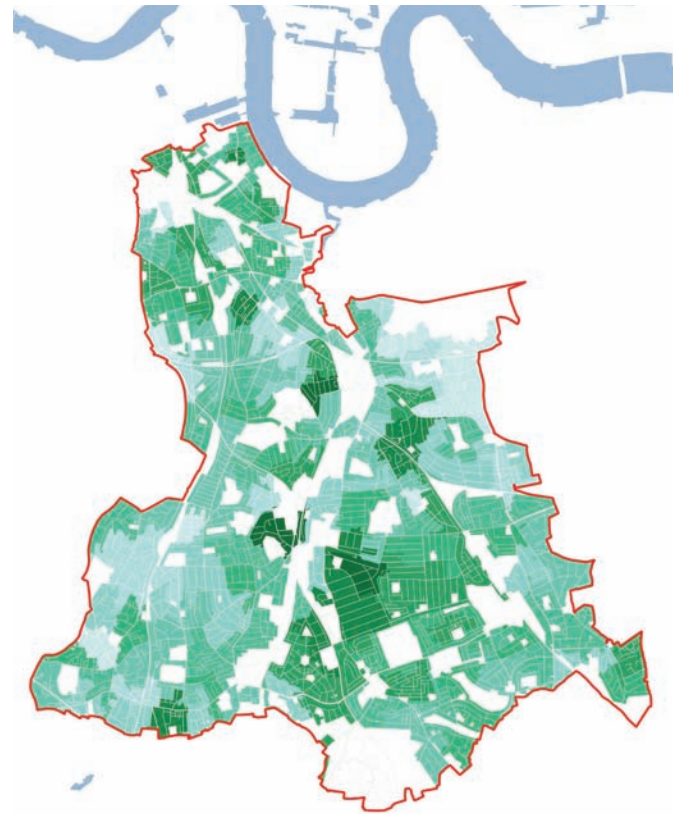
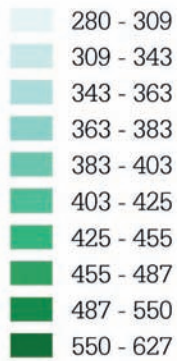
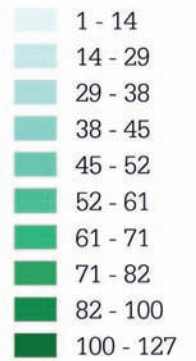


Fig 14 5 and more people in household



Homes

- 2.2.19 Levels of home ownership are significantly lower in the north of the borough around Deptford and Surrey Quays.
- 2.2.20 Pockets of high ownership, like in southern Catford and Grove Park, are likely to indicate a wealthier population and reflect the private development of those areas.
- 2.2.21 Conversely, social rented housing is concentrated to the north and south, in Deptford, Bellingham and Downham. There are pockets in Deptford where 90-100% of homes are social rented.
- 2.2.22 Privately rented homes are spread across the borough, but become less common further south.

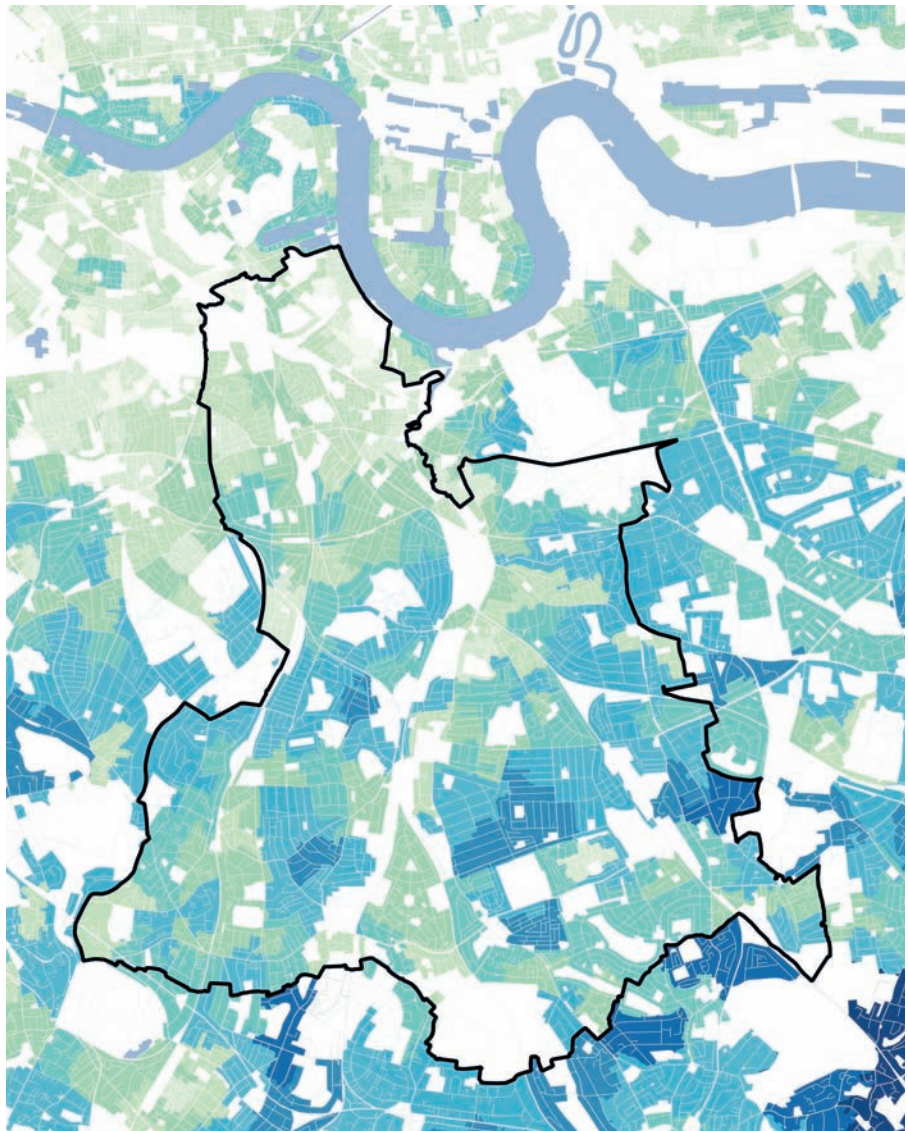
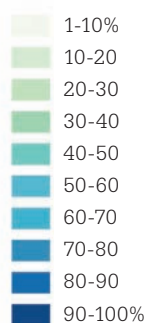


Fig 15 Tenure - Owned



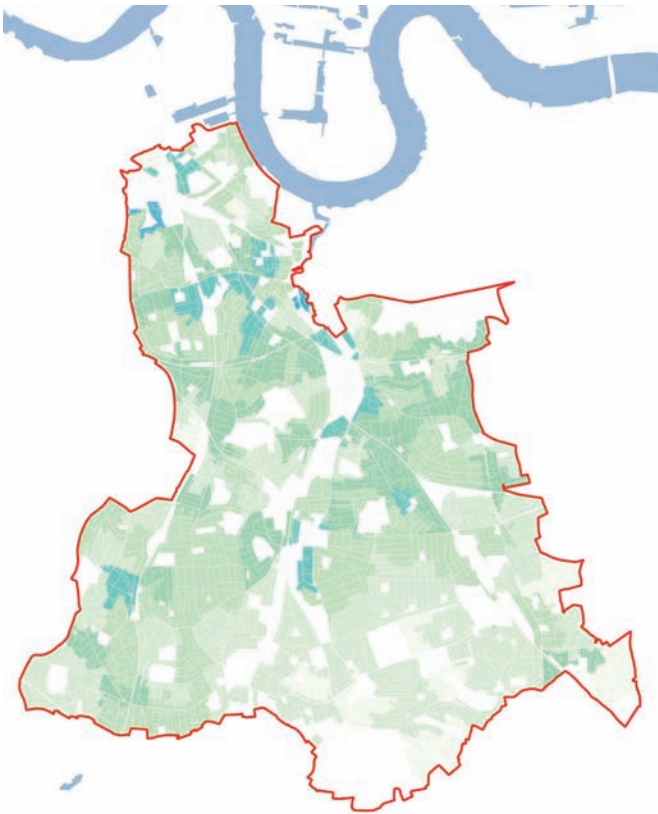


Fig 16 Tenure - private rented

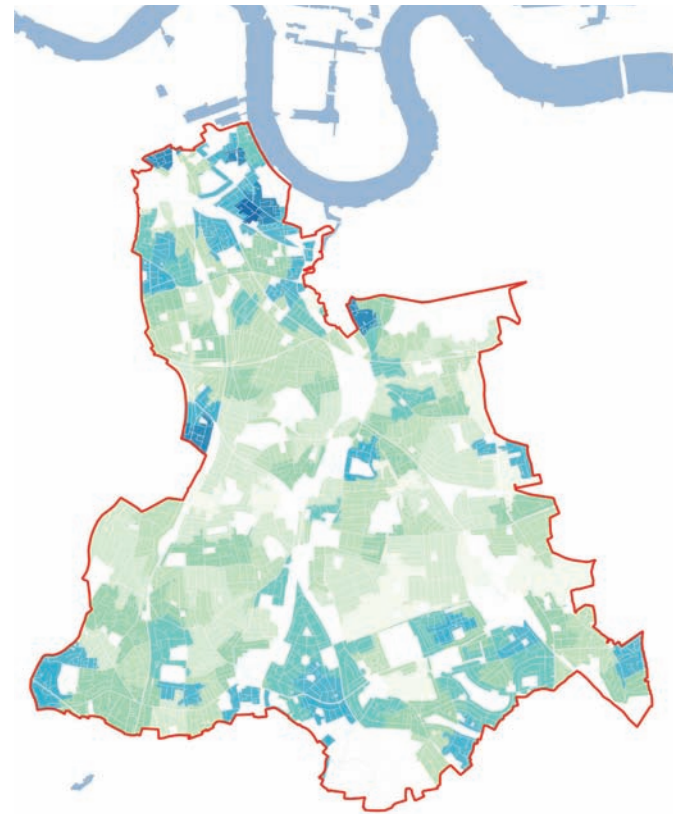
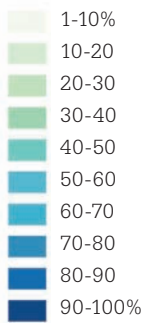


Fig 17 Tenure - social rented



2.3 CONSULTATION

2.3.1 The characterisation work has been informed by a number of consultation events, the feedback from which has shaped the material within this report. The events collected information about the following:

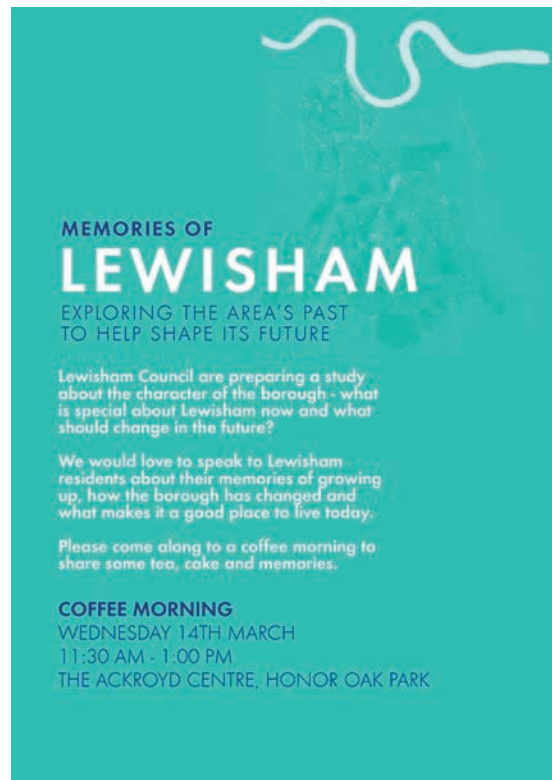
- How the borough has changed over time and residents reflections on the development of Lewisham and their memories of living here;
- The places, neighbourhoods and communities in the borough; and
- Current issues and future opportunities for the borough.

Memories of Lewisham

2.3.2 As part of the consultation exercise, members of the team visited The Elder People's Support Project (EPSP) coffee morning which is held weekly at the Ackroyd Centre at Honor Oak Park. We met with a number of older people and interviewed them about their memories of living in Lewisham. The conversations gave an insight into how the borough has changed over time, about people's work life, family and community life, as well as how they travelled and recreational activities. Old photographs were shared to help stimulate memories.

2.3.3 A number of residents shared how they had moved to the borough from elsewhere. One resident had settled in Lewisham from Pakistan. He described how people used to help him find the best bus routes to get around town. The green spaces and markets were mentioned as being particularly special to the borough and valued places to spend time in.

2.3.4 Quotes from residents are shared opposite.



“We were the landlord of a pub called the Brown Bear in Deptford - we had musicians from the church in on Sunday, David Shepherd the cricketer and even the Bishop used to pop in - as well as local worker from the docks”

“The parks make the borough special - use them or lose them!”



Residents spoke of the markets in Deptford and Lewisham. The top photo shows Lewisham High Street and Market in the 1960s. The bottom photo shows a cricket match at Mayow Park.

Both historic images © Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)

“I love the markets - Deptford market is where you used to buy cleaning products because you couldn't get them anywhere else. Lewisham market was great for fruit - it still is today!”

“I moved here from Jamaica when I was a young woman and have worked as a nurse in all the hospitals in south London - many of which have now closed! I love the green spaces in the area and how well connected it is”

“This area (Honor Oak) is really special - lots of people have lived in the houses since they were built and the sense of community is really strong - my Dad helped to build the houses!”

2.3.5 Places and views workshop

The places and views workshop was held on Thursday 19th April 2018 at Lewisham Civic Suite. Attendees were from across the borough and represented a wide spectrum of community groups and interests. The aims of the workshop were to:

- Introduce the characterisation work, including the historic analysis and borough wide mapping of environmental and townscape features;
- Test the existing 'place' boundaries and identify changes including new ones and those that should be merged; and
- Identify important views and landmarks and understand why these are significant.

2.3.6 There was an interesting discussion about what influences our perception of a 'place' - heritage and character, postcodes, train stations, shops, community facilities and weekend activities.

The key messages were:

- Deptford is too large and not one place - the northern most part faces towards Surrey Quays;
- The boundary between New Cross / Telegraph Hill / Brockley is not quite right - Telegraph Hill is a smaller and more specific place;
- Sydenham Hill / Forest Hill / Perry Hill should be reviewed based on Victorian character. There was a question as to whether Sydenham Hill should be a separate area; and
- Eastern train tracks from Hither Green to Grove Park are a strong dividing line.

2.3.7 People also had the opportunity to highlight on important landmarks and views within, into and out of the Borough. This provided a useful starting point for more in-depth analysis.



Photos from stakeholder workshop 1



Issues and opportunities workshop

2.3.8 The second workshop was held on Tuesday 15th May at Lewisham Civic Suite. The principal aim of the workshop was to define the character of different neighbourhoods and identify issues and opportunities for each place. It also provided the opportunity to gain an understanding about the community projects and neighbourhood plan work happening across the borough. The team fed back the emerging results from the previous workshop as well as the emerging direction of travel for the study.

2.3.9 Plans of each sub-area were laid out on tables and attendees were encouraged to gather around an area that they had most interest in. The discussions were insightful and a lot of ideas were generated which have helped to inform the sub-area analysis in the latter half of this report.



Photos from stakeholder workshop 2

