

## APPENDIX B

### Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum application

The process requires an individual decision by the Regeneration portfolio holder to consult on your application. To prepare this report I need you to provide me with the following:

#### 1. A map identifying the area

The map has been published on the BNF website and a copy can be provided in A4 format for the file. It has been circulated for over a year now including a copy in a A5 flyer that was first released at the 2011 Bermondsey Street Faire.

#### 2. A statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated

Any designation of an area will throw up questions as to what was included and what was excluded. The BNF had a number of meetings to discuss the boundary for the designated area. A large number of views were expressed. Advice from the LBS was to use a smaller or small area. Others had the view that the area has to be more inclusive so that the mix of people, business and other groupings was balanced. It would be much easier to designate a small area which has rather uniform interests. Initially there was a feeling that the focus was only on Bermondsey Street, the businesses along the street and the more well off who benefit from the upmarket atmosphere represented by the street. To counter this assumption, we made sure that we were more inclusive.

As the first urban front runner designated by DCLG, the BNF has stuck to the principal that the boundaries are there for a reason and we will be sensitive to interests of those just outside the designated areas. In one group meeting, we referred to the areas on the boarder as the hip areas which was to mean they are important to consider when drawing up plans for the area inside the boundaries.

For the BNF, we extended boundaries so we would largely avoid breaking up existing housing estates. We included some areas such as More London as the economic importance spills over even though there is next to no development possible in the More London area. We included both sides of Tower Bridge Road so that we could address the view from the street in a consistent fashion. For Borough High Street we took a different approach as there is a strong community group on the other side of Borough High Street. To the south we use the border of the Trinity Square conservation area and the Elephant & Castle redevelopment as natural limits to the BNF's focus.

In other words we were pragmatic as much as possible while acknowledging the size of the task and the interests of established communities that are the BNF's neighbour. It has been stated that the designated area includes 53% social households, church buildings of various faiths, schools, Council and City government offices, a a teaching

hospital that happens to be the tallest in the world, the UK headquarters for large multi-nationals and a large number of creative firms with more local roots. The vibe of the area when you wander the streets was important to many of the residents and that vibe means different things to different people.

It should be noted that by following the natural boundaries we have increased the complexity and the size of the task. Community consultation is harder when you have a large and diverse community. The need for individual sub-plans that join up becomes a challenge. More so when sub-groups of people are ready at different points in time.

3. A statement that the organisation or body is relevant for the purposes of the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act)

The criteria the council will be using for decision making is as follows

1. Has the map been submitted identifying the area?

There should be no confusion on this point. If there is, it is easily clarified.

2. Has the statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated been submitted?

See above plus other materials indicating how the group has engaged with members of the community.

3. Has the statement that the organisation or body is relevant for the purposes of the 1990 Act been submitted?

Not sure I know what the 1990 Act sets out and what part of the Act applies to the designation under the Localism Act.

4. Is there already a neighbourhood plan covering this area?

The plan is a work in progress. We have created a process by which plans for specific Action Areas can be developed. We have created the first of these and it focuses on the Long Lane Action Area. Another piece of work is being produced that will focus on the St Thomas Action Area.

Each Action Area has unique needs and opportunities. The overall plan will follow a consistent process and format while individual Action Area needs will drive the level of detail in the overall plan.

5. How do the boundaries relate to current and proposed planning designations?

The BNF boundaries are driven obvious conditions. In the north there is a river that defines where we stop. In the East and West there is a major traffic artery and how we include or straddle the eastern and western artery reflects what local groups on the two sides are actively doing at the time the BNF made its decisions. In other words we want to work with and complement the neighbouring groups when they exist while not ignoring an opportunity to address a specific streetscape if there is no champion on one side of the street.

In the south we lined up with existing conservation areas or redevelopment areas where they existed or used a major artery that otherwise acts as a natural division in terms of housing and commerce.

#### 6. Is the proposed area appropriate?

The BNF strongly feel it is. We have discussed the area with various ward counselors and have listened to their feedback. We have taken on a federated approach to the development of the plan so local champions who want to drive the work in a specific street of estate can do so with the resources and guidance from the larger community.

#### 7. Should the area be a business area?

The area has many businesses and there is a large mix of types. The largest employer in the area is a teaching hospital and university. The businesses range from the corner shop to the tallest office building in Europe. The Mayor's office is within the area as is Southwark Council. Some famous restaurants feature prominently as do a mix of business such as bicycle repair in the rail arches. London Bridge train station is part of the area.

With all of that said, there are close to 20,000 people living in the designated area. The socio-economic mix is dramatic as we have many different people who call the designated area home. The community is changing and based on the historical information we have collect, the area has always been a home to dramatic change.

Based on the number of residents calling the area a business area would be a disservice. BNF feels that is no reason a mixed area such as the one designated could not be planned for as a whole.

#### 8. Would a business referendum be required?

This is an unknown. The businesses should have a say in any local plans. The BNF has built ties to the local business groups who represent a subset of the businesses in the area. As part of the conciliation process we expect to further capture the views of local businesses. Having a vote just for businesses might be interest through it is not clear what added insight it would provide. Including businesses in a vote then begs the question of how many votes any one business should have and just who would be voting. Does Guy's Hospital have 1 vote for the hospital and 1 vote for Kings? Should the Mayor vote for everyone in his office? If there are multiple tenants in the Shard at the time of the vote would there be one vote for the building of one vote for each business who has space in the building? How do you manage the votes of the

creatives who tend to freelance and might even be working from a shared space or working from home?

We are comfortable working with a number of plans for individual areas, however please note that there can only be 1 referendum for each neighbourhood forum. Please let me know if you would like further information. I have a couple of detailed comments on the plan for Lordship Lane. I will provide you with these by the end of the week.