

APPLICATION FORM FOR A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

Name of Neighbourhood Forum

Elephant and Walworth Neighbourhood Forum.

Chair of Neighbourhood Forum

The position of Chair rotates as set out in our Constitution. The contact point is through the position of Secretary which is shared between Sofia Roupakia (sofia.roupakia@gmail.com) and Enrico Costanza (e.costanza@ieee.org).

Contact details for Neighbourhood Forum

The contact details for the public domain are as above, together with the neighbourhood forum's website <http://ewnf.herokuapp.com>
We have provided the Council with the telephone number and address of the Secretary.

1. How have you considered different routes to achieving your ambitions for your neighbourhood?

We have been involved in consultations on Council plans and ideas, with some successes, but we find Council plans lack the local distinctiveness and level of detail we are seeking. We make use of opportunities provided by Council structures for engagement, such as deputations, attending Community Council, policy consultations, public examinations and the planning applications process. We wish to explore a model that is community led and that allows us to engage directly with business, educational and transport interests.

2. What are the opportunities and benefits of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for your area?

The Neighbourhood Plan will deliver better planning in our area. It will have legal status and give us greater influence over planning decisions in our neighbourhood, the opportunity to specify development sites and work in partnership with service providers, developers and key stakeholders.

The opportunity of deciding and agreeing on a plan for the neighbourhood area will give motivation and enthusiasm to many people, who otherwise feel disempowered. The neighbourhood planning approach will allow people to learn new skills (like participatory mapping or planning policy knowledge) and to pass on and share experiences. Discussion and consensus making will provide stronger community cohesion throughout the neighbourhood and the Forum will provide a welcoming and informed community locus for new residents to the area.

3. Is there already a Neighbourhood Plan for this area?

There is no neighbourhood plan for this area.

4. How does this plan relate to boundaries of other neighbourhood areas?

As a result of our discussions with LBS's Lead Member for Regeneration we have agreed to align our boundary with the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area.

5. What is the neighbourhood area to which the Neighbourhood Plan will relate? Map and text please.

The Elephant and Walworth Neighbourhood Forum is proposing a Walworth Neighbourhood Plan. A map of the proposed neighbourhood area is attached. The area covers all of Newington ward (Newington, Draper, Pullens and Brandon estates), some of East Walworth ward and some of Faraday ward (surrounding the Aylesbury estate).

The boundary line is in the middle of the road throughout to reflect the preference of the local authority.

6. What are the alternative boundaries that you have considered and why did you chose the boundary proposed?

We considered:-

- a) a small neighbourhood area in part of East Walworth, but this would not provide an integrated approach to planning and development across the Elephant and Castle. Consultation with the Local Authority identified they would not support an area focussed on the former-Heygate estate.
- b) Including part of Newington ward with the boundary at Pasley Park. Outreach activity showed that Lorrimore Square, Brandon estate and De Laune estate identified with the rest of Newington ward and did not want to fall between the Elephant & Castle and Camberwell.
- c) a boundary line at East Street, taking in the Liverpool Grove Streets for People scheme. Outreach activity showed strong interest from people living in the area surrounding the Aylesbury estate, who didn't want to fall between the Elephant & Castle and the Aylesbury estate masterplan area. The neighbourhood plan will add value to areas of the Aylesbury Area Action Plan which are outside of the core estate and dealt with lightly in the Council's proposals.
- d) a boundary at Sedan Way. Outreach activity showed interest in including more of East Walworth ward because of green links running throughout East Walworth and the common character of the retail offer in the SE17 Walworth Town Team area including Old Kent Road between East Street and Albany Road.
- e) we did extensive outreach in the Rockingham area to be sure that people wanted to be with us. We worked closely with the 3 ward councillors (Chaucer ward) 2 of whom are members of the neighbourhood forum. An outreach report for the Rockingham area is attached as a case study of our approach.

f) at our conference in September 2013 there was interest in a possible extension of the area to include the Elephant and Castle Enterprise Quarter, London South Bank University and London College of Communications. We asked those who wished to extend the boundary to engage in outreach work and report back to the Forum meeting in December 2013. The report identified that we did not have the resources or capacity to include the Enterprise Quarter in the neighbourhood area.

g) in January 2014 we submitted an application for area designation based on the above. There then followed extensive consultation with LBS who expressed concerns about the size and strategic sites, for which LBS already had development plans. LBS raised particular concerns about Old Kent Road Opportunity Area where neighbourhood planning would take place at the same time as the Council's preparation of an Opportunity Area Planning Framework.

h) we held a conference on the 4 July 2015, where it was agreed that we put forward the proposed reduced neighbourhood area under common agreement with LBS whilst retaining a neighbourhood forum for the wider area. A common agreement with LBS provided recognition of the neighbourhood forum as a consultative body for areas surrounding the neighbourhood planning area, such as the Old Kent Road and low-line project (confirmed by letter of Lead Member dated 3 July 2015). The conference agreed that consultative status was also required for the remainder of the wider area specifically Rockingham Estate and Trinity Newington, Elephant Road and New Kent Road.

Following guidance from Locality, we propose that the Forum's consultative role in planning policy and development is provided by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the neighbourhood forum and LBS. The MOU is a model that is encouraged by DCLG and in our case its content could also clarify referendum boundaries, the sharing of data and other information and the allocation of the neighbourhood portion of CIL.

We wish the MOU to be considered as part of this application and seek a meeting with the Council to draft the Memorandum, with the expert assistance of Locality's consultant.

7. What are the physical characteristics, planning and any other reasons that you considered for choosing the boundary?

We have chosen an area that has effective physical boundaries, including known areas that require particular attention for planning purposes and aligned with borough and ward boundaries where appropriate. We follow the borough boundary with Lambeth, the ward boundary with Camberwell, the boundary with the Aylesbury estate and the transport links departing from the Elephant and Castle southern roundabout and extending east and south.

At the heart of our area is the core offer of Walworth Road, East Street market where most people living within the boundary area shop, socialise and conduct much of their daily business.

The railway viaduct running approximately the length of the area is another connecting feature of planning significance providing retail, employment and leisure opportunities.

The proposed boundary will enable us to take a grounded and joined up approach to planning and development of the proposed area. For example, we would like to improve the connectivity of the area through green links. Within the boundary area there is a strong identification with the Walworth area as tested through our outreach programme. There is particular merit including in our area East and West Walworth with its shared historic character and heritage and not allowing Walworth Road to be a barrier.

8. Have you consulted a range of local people, partners, businesses, community groups, residents, councillors and other stakeholders to assess levels of interest? What did they say? Where did they think the boundary should be? How did they relate to the proposed neighbourhood? How many did you consult? What were the demographics?

We undertook extensive outreach activity including stalls at various festivals, attending Area Housing Forums, surveying local businesses, one to one meetings with the councillors who represent the area, contact with all TRA's, and with faith groups, traders associations, and communities of interest such as the Latin American, Bengali and Somali communities.

We listened to what people told us, discussed, debated and then agreed the boundary at an open conference. We have tapped into the knowledge of local councillors and included on our consultees list their suggestions about groups and individuals we should work with in the preparation of the neighbourhood plan. Everyone who lives or works in our area is welcome to join with us.

The outcomes of these consultations are summarised in question 6 above. The outcome was support for neighbourhood planning from across a wider area than the neighbourhood area proposed in this application. Our solution is to propose a Memorandum of Understanding that will link the wider area forum with a smaller area neighbourhood plan.

We also append the three reports 'Elephant & Castle and Walworth Conference report' (Sept 2013), 'Is the Elephant your Neighbourhood?' (Jan 2012), and 'Imagine the Elephant' (May 2011). These detail the range of people, partners, businesses, community groups, residents, councillors and council officers consulted and the views and actions arising from each event.

Funding from Locality enabled us to run three workshops on each of our key themes Green Infrastructure, Community Assets and Small Local Businesses, each attracting wide participation and producing useful evidence for the neighbourhood plan.

UCL Masters Planning students were engaged by the neighbourhood Forum to conduct further research in each of our three core themes through in-depth case studies and surveys of local residents and businesses.

We have carried out extensive engagement with business throughout the neighbourhood area. The research undertaken by UCL students on ethnic minority businesses has been shared with Cllr Mark Williams and Juliet Seymour. Our engagement with the Latin Elephant business community including mapping and survey work has been raised at several meetings including an early meeting with Simon Bevan. East Street traders have attended our conferences.

9. How have you resolved conflict with other groups who have issues with your proposal?

Within the Forum there has been no conflict with other groups. We always try to resolve issues through consensus, allowing time and space for compromises to occur, and only vote as a last resort. This process is set out in our constitution.

We faced disagreement over whether to include the Aylesbury estate. This was brought up and debated each time we considered the boundary options. Though the option was not supported it continued to be pushed and ultimately was put to a vote at our conference in September 2013. It was agreed not to include the Aylesbury estate.

At the 2013 conference, there was also some disagreement about the possibility to extend the boundaries to the north and west of the roundabout including London South Bank University and London College of Communication. A discussion led us to agree that people wishing to extend the boundaries would engage in outreach work within the area proposed for extension and then report back to the forum. After further investigation and discussion, it was agreed not to include this area.

At our July 2015 Conference, support for a smaller area neighbourhood plan was secured through proposals to retain a wider area forum. A key tool for providing linkages between the smaller and wider areas is a Memorandum of Understanding (see question 6 where this is proposed).

As the neighbourhood plan develops, there will be disagreements of course. We hope to avoid these tuning into conflict by a bottom up and consensual approach so the pace of neighbourhood planning activity in different parts of the area will depend on the level of enthusiasm on the ground.

We have welcomed representatives of other proposed neighbourhood forums to our conferences. They have played an active role in discussions and we have benefitted from their experiences.

10. When did you walk around the boundary with Juliet Seymour Planning Policy Manager to discuss the reasons for the boundary chosen?

We have held several meetings with Juliet Seymour to discuss the rationale for the boundary and have always been keen to receive her comments. She suggested a physical walk was not necessary in our case.

11. What did your review of existing local policy to identify how well it covers community concerns and aspirations find?

Many members of the neighbourhood forum took part in the public consultation on the Elephant & Castle OAPF and organised an event specifically to discuss this, attended by councillors and council officers in Jan 2012. This provided us with a checklist of issues on which we were keen to see more detailed work such as green links, support for local shops and businesses, pedestrian and cycling routes.

Planning policy for West Walworth is not particularly detailed, but we have discussed with Parks and Leisure Services their play and open space initiatives and how we can describe and link these in the neighbourhood plan.

We are interested in Local Plan initiatives on hot food takeaways, betting shops and studentification and want to apply these in our area.

So far, we have concentrated on establishing the forum but as we prepare the neighbourhood plan we will be addressing the above issues.

12. What are the resource implications (time and money) of producing a Neighbourhood Plan? How will you provide them?

We have our own website and links on other local websites. We will continue to access central government grants through Locality to provide paid professional support on planning policy and to help fund the community engagement programme (e.g. participatory mapping). We will also explore other sources of funding such as the Big Lottery fund and charitable trusts.

We have identified agencies and consultants who provide pro-bono services on neighbourhood planning and local organisations (such as Business Extra, Walworth society, Southwark Living Streets and East Walworth Green Links) who can help with community engagement, meeting venues and printing. We provide refreshments through voluntary donation. We can draw on many volunteers from the neighbourhood who will freely provide time and local expertise to produce the Plan, as they have done to date.

13. When and how did you involve Juliet Seymour Planning Policy Manager juliet.seymour@southwark.gov.uk to clarify the support it can offer under its duty to support?

We held regular meetings with Juliet Seymour, had numerous email conversations and we look forward to working closely with Juliet and her colleagues under the duty to support. For example, the Local Authority providing technical advice on planning issues, including access to the Local Authority evidence base. The types of support that are appropriate are outlined in the Locality route map.

14. Who are the 21 members of your neighbourhood forum? Do you have a resident, business and ward member on the forum? How is this group representative of the demographics of the proposed area?

Please list the names and addresses at the end. I will contact the members for them to agree that they are on the Neighbourhood Forum.

We have 92 members of the neighbourhood forum, including residents, businesses and local councillors. The membership reflects local diversity and character including minority ethnic groups, faith groups, tenants, owner-occupiers, small businesses to give some examples. For verification we attach a list of members, with postal addresses, all of whom live within the boundary area. The number of members within the neighbourhood planning area is 66.

15. Please enclose your constitution. We would recommend that this should meet the standards set out by the charity commission. This is required for us to make a decision on whether the group could operate as a Neighbourhood Forum.

Our constitution meets the standards set out in Locality's Neighbourhood Planning Worksheet 3 and we have received support from Locality in its preparation. The constitution is attached and includes amendments proposed at our conference in July 2015 which await ratification.

Checklist

1. Have you enclosed your map of the proposal?
2. Have you enclosed your constitution?
3. Have you enclosed the names and contact details of your chair and members?

NB This application form is based on the DCLG Good practice guidance prepared by Locality <http://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Roadmap-worksheets.pdf>