

Application form for a Neighbourhood Area_Sydenham Hill Ridge_May 2019

Please complete this form with the information that Southwark Council requires for an application for a neighbourhood area.

Name of Neighbourhood Forum: Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Forum

Chair of Neighbourhood Forum: Monica Fletcher (Convenor)

Contact details for Neighbourhood Forum: news@sydenhamhillridge.london

Question	Neighbourhood Forum Response	Council officer comment
<p>1 How have you considered different routes to achieving your ambitions for your neighbourhood?</p>	<p>There seems a good fit between our aspirations and the neighbourhood planning process. Making effective use of the neighbourhood planning process is core to our purposes. We talk more about what these ambitions are in the answer to Question 2 below.</p> <p>We are not aware of any realistic alternative process. Possible alternatives might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. using the two local planning processes. However there are no existing bodies that support engaging the whole local community across the ridge in these processes; and the twin local plan processes do not have the unified approach or local perspective that a neighbourhood plan will bring. <p>Working informally to articulate a vision outside the formal planning process. But this does not give local people the voice that a neighbourhood plan can.</p>	

<p>2 What are the opportunities and benefits of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for your area?</p>	<p>Sydenham Hill Ridge is a natural entity defined and unified by geography and character but marginalised and divided by administrative boundaries. It is also a changing area.</p> <p><i>Awareness and Responsiveness</i></p> <p>What do people in the area want? What do they value? What do they need? How do they want to shape the area they live in over the next decade? Currently there is no body that brings together people across the administrative boundaries in the ridge to articulate a common vision for the area.</p> <p><i>Shared character</i></p> <p>Early discussions suggest that many local people share a sense that the wider area has a shared character that is valued. This sense of a wider area is supported by the evidence contained in the Commonplace site established by the City of London (“CoL”), in connection with pre-app consultation for CoL’s proposed changes to Sydenham Hill Estate on the Lewisham side. We refer in particular to over 90, often lengthy, individual responses to CoL’s Proposal 3 within https://sydenhamhill.commonplace.is/schemes/proposals/consultation-and-feedback/details.</p> <p>A neighbourhood plan could help to articulate this sense, and to help ensure that the characteristics people value are enhanced rather than damaged as development goes through. This includes aspects of the built environment, the streetscape and the natural environment in our high, wooded ridge. The area holds its character on both sides of the administrative border. A neighbourhood plan can help make sure that</p>	

decisions on both side of the ridge are made synergistically.

Shared needs and services/ An end to marginalisation

A neighbourhood plan could help to focus on the needs of the area. We hope that that will mean that development works for the people who live and work here; and that facilities are more likely to be developed efficiently to serve in ways that take account of the needs of people in the area regardless of which side of the border they lie.

Again, our preliminary meetings have highlighted a sense that because we are on the fringes of administrative areas, we can be removed from services and facilities. For example, people have raised questions about how well we are connected to the public transport network, and especially public transport links from Sydenham Hill station to homes on the ridge; as well as bus services to Forest Hill.

We have also seen within the last 12 months a change to traffic management in the south west section of Sydenham Hill road imposed by Southwark on the Lewisham side of Sydenham Hill, without correct consultation, resulting in Lewisham not enforcing the changes on their side.

A voice for affordable housing

The demand for affordable housing is an important theme for all Londoners and we hope that the forum can play a part in focusing attention on how this need can be addressed in our Area, while respecting the amenity enjoyed by existing Residents, and providing

	<p>all Londoners with accessible and welcoming space for “green lungs”</p> <p><i>Should the Area be a business area?</i></p> <p>We do not think so. There are very few service businesses in the Area (other than home offices), and no manufacturing businesses. The major businesses are 1 pub (on the Southwark side); retirement homes, nursery and 1 small shop on the Hillcrest Estate (on the Lewisham side).</p> <p><i>A stronger community</i></p> <p>The neighbourhood planning process also has the potential to bring people together towards a consensus view of their aspirations for the area. This has the possibility of generating a stronger, more networked, better connected community.</p> <p>The emerging forum is a young body and we hope that the neighbourhood planning process will help to clarify and articulate the different visions that are held in the community for our area.</p>	
<p>3. Is there already a Neighbourhood Plan for this area?</p>	<p>There is no Neighbourhood Plan for the Area or for parts of the Area.</p> <p>Since July 2018, we have been widely publicising our activities both within the Neighbourhood Area, with established amenity societies which cover parts of the Area (such as The Dulwich Society, the Forest Hill Society and the Sydenham Society), with the two Boroughs between whom the Area is divided (both with Elected Representatives</p>	

	<p>and with Planning Officers); and with The Dulwich Estate which has significant planning rights over much of the Area within Southwark). We have heard of nobody else having proposed or intending to propose a Neighbourhood Plan for the Area, or parts of the area.</p>	
<p>4 How does this plan relate to boundaries of other neighbourhood areas?</p>	<p>There are no Neighbourhood Areas adjacent to Sydenham Hill Ridge.</p> <p>The only neighbouring planning designation actively under discussion, of which we are aware, is being prepared by Friends of Crystal Palace.</p> <p>We have walked around the proposed border of Sydenham Hill Ridge and Crystal Palace with representatives of the Friends of Crystal Palace, and agreed the border without difficulty, by reference to major roads, topography and massing of trees.</p> <p>As discussed in our answer to Q3, we have also spoken extensively with three neighbouring and well-established civic societies, Dulwich Society, Forest Hill Society and Sydenham Society. None of these civic societies intend to launch a neighbourhood plan for their respective areas, or have heard of any plan on the boundaries of our neighbourhood areas, other than Crystal Palace referred to in our answer to question 3 above.</p>	
<p>5 What is the neighbourhood area to which the Neighbourhood Plan will relate? Map and text please.</p>	<p>The proposed Neighbourhood Planning Area runs broadly in a north east/south westerly direction from opposite Horniman Museum in the north east, to the meeting point of Sydenham Hill road with Crystal Palace roundabout in the south west, following the line of Sydenham Hill road and Sydenham Hill ridge.</p> <p>The proposed borders are essentially defined by contour lines, and</p>	

	<p>characterised by protected woods and green spaces.</p> <p>The area is predominantly residential and the majority of the housing stock is concentrated on larger post-war social housing estates. These are described on the Lewisham side, in the Lewisham Characterisation Study, as “free form suburban blocks set within communal landscaped gardens..”</p> <p>The Lewisham side of the Area has been described, for the first time we believe, in the recent draft Lewisham Characterisation Study (page 178), published since we submitted our Area application to Lewisham, and Lewisham’s Area largely overlaps with the Area proposed.</p> <p>We are attaching a copy of the section of the draft Lewisham Characterisation Study which relates to Sydenham Hill.</p> <p>From a topographical and environmental aspect, the area is clearly identifiable and unitary due to its physical and ecological characteristics, steep upper slopes, mile-long but narrow plateau (“the Ridge”), expansive woods and green spaces on the Ridge and upper slopes.</p> <p>However, for administrative reasons, the area has been divided between different councils and parishes, and as a result is often relegated to the edge or margin of other, bigger groups’ planning policies and priorities.</p> <p>For our map, we refer to Appendix 1.</p>	
<p>6 What are the alternative boundaries that you have considered and why did you chose the boundary proposed?</p>	<p>Formed by the distinct hilly topography of the ridge, the area is largely self-identifying.</p>	

	<p>However to endeavour to make sure that there is no overlap with other prospective Neighbourhood Forums, we have spoken with CP Neighbours to the south west; and with civic societies linked to Dulwich Village, the renaissance of Forest Hill in the north east, and with Sydenham to the south. We have found no conflicts.</p> <p>We also consulted residents on the South Eastern fringes of the boundary area to establish whether they identified with Sydenham Hill Ridge or with Dulwich and taken those views into account when setting the boundary on that side.</p>	
<p>7 What are the physical characteristics, planning and any other reasons that you considered for choosing the boundary?</p>	<p>Distinct topography, above all.</p> <p>Please see further the answers to questions 2 and 5 above.</p> <p>In this context, we notice in particular the Opportunities identified in the draft Lewisham Characterisation Study of Sydenham Hill:</p> <p>. <i>“Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further promote the very strong sense of woodland character in this area. • Explore opportunities for street trees, SUDs and new greenways to enhance this character. • As an Area of Special Character its architectural and townscape merit and local distinctiveness can be better 	

	<p>protected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views of landmarks, up / down roads and panoramas are an important contributor to its character and could be enhanced. ” <p>These opportunities could apply equally, in our preliminary view, to the whole of Sydenham Hill Ridge.</p>	
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<p>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?</p>	<p>We have so far had 13 public meetings and community walkabouts since we started in July 2018. Reports of the meetings are on our website www.sydenhamhillridge.london (see meetings #1 to 7, and 10-14). We have also met with representatives of other organisations in the area, including officers and planners of Southwark and Lewisham Council (see meetings #8 and 9 on our web site), the Dulwich Society, Sydenham Society and Forest Hill Society and emerging neighbourhood planning group in Crystal Palace and elsewhere in south London, members of TRAs/ RAs of estates in the area, as well as The Dulwich Estate.</p> <p>There has been a surprising level of interest and widespread support for the idea of a neighbourhood plan from residents in all types of housing across the area and borough boundaries; from businesses and volunteers across the area; from residents of all ages above 35; and from residents coming from different countries of origin. There has been no real controversy about the suggested boundary.</p>	
<p>9 How have you resolved conflict with other groups who have issues with your proposal?</p>	<p>There has been no conflict. We think this reflects the obvious way in which the topography defines the area.</p>	
<p>10 When did you walk around the boundary with Juliet Seymour Planning Policy Manager to discuss the reasons for the boundary chosen? Juliet.Seymour@southwark.gov.uk</p>	<p>We have not met Juliet Seymour but on 22nd November 2018, representatives of SHRF met Luke Taylor, Urban Planner with Southwark Planning Division. We walked/ drove around the area and discussed the boundary with him. We also met with Chris Frazer and</p>	

	<p>David Symes of Lewisham on 1st November 2018.</p> <p>At both meetings we were told something about the support (and limits to the support) that might be available from the lead borough.</p>	
<p>11 What did your review of existing local policy to identify how well it covers community concerns and aspirations find?</p>	<p>Our aspirations include a process for exploring and articulating at a local level how Residents, businesses and volunteers across the Sydenham Hill Ridge see the future of the area. The neighbourhood planning process itself is integral here.</p> <p>Since we started our review, we have been encouraged by Lewisham publishing the first ever draft Characterisation Study of Sydenham Hill, as part of the draft Lewisham Borough Plan.</p>	
<p>12 What are the resource implications (time and money) of producing a Neighbourhood Plan? How will you provide them?</p>	<p>We are aware that the demands of producing a neighbourhood plan will be significant. Our initial meeting with Lewisham's planning officers in November 2018; several discussions with Angela Koch of Imagine Places regarding community engagement; and informal guidance from Kay Pallaris of Mapping Futures in respect of mapping techniques and how to consider recently completed major recent developments in the Area, specifically Wells Park Place (on the Lewisham side) were most helpful here.</p> <p>At this stage ahead of designation, we do not have a formal project plan.</p> <p>The emerging forum has a Committee and an informal Steering Group to coordinate local volunteer input. We have benefited so far from the professional experience of supporters with expertise in law (for our constitution), project management, planning and the environment; and</p>	

	<p>will continue to seek participation from those with relevant skills in the local community.</p> <p>We have preliminary expert advice from Angela Koch at Imagine Places and will continue to seek guidance and support as the process evolves where necessary.</p> <p>We have been accepted for a small Neighbourhood Planning Grant by Groundwork UK under the Neighbourhood Planning Programme for initial costs.</p> <p>We do not wish to charge membership fees as we think that can be a barrier to participation but may need to explore crowd funding as the process continues.</p> <p>We are looking to learn from other community organisations about efficient ways of managing the information gathering and engagement processes we will need. We have for example met with Kingswood Community Group (Southwark) to learn from their experience of mapping local community resources.</p> <p>Our task may be more manageable than for other neighbourhood forums on account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the unitary topographical nature of our area,• the natural barriers to the number of roads and railway lines bisecting the area, particularly any north-south route into and out of central London,• the very limited shopping and spaces of public entertainment (1 shop, 1 pub),	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the absence of any educational institutions, • the absence of any doctors' surgeries or medical facilities, • the topography and conservation areas which limit the physical area for development, • the draft Characterisation Study for the Lewisham side of Sydenham Hill published since we started. <p>Consequently, we believe that the resources we have assembled are sufficient to produce a neighbourhood plan for review by the Boroughs within 18 months of designation.</p>	
<p>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?</p>	<p>Please see the answer to question 9.</p> <p>We would welcome any further comments you may have on this point.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>Please see list and map at Appendix 2.</p> <p>Our members are drawn from across the proposed area; from both Boroughs; and from housing estates variously managed by public sector and The Dulwich Estate, as well as from private houses and apartment blocks. There is a broad spread of age, gender, and number of years living in the Area among our Supporters.</p> <p>Our email list is many times the size of our members list, and reflects a similar diversity and birthplace of origin.</p>	
<p>15 Please enclose your constitution. We would recommend that this</p>	<p>See Appendix 3. Based on the legal advice of one of our Supporters, we believe this constitution meet the standards set out by the</p>	

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.	charity commission.	
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Appendices

1. Map of area
2. List of members
3. Constitution

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/wpcontent/uploads/Roadmap-worksheets.pdf>