

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE LEE

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2031

EXAMINER: DEREK STEBBING B.A. (Hons), Dip. E.P., MRTPI

Sarah McMichael
Chair - Lee Neighbourhood Forum

Christopher Frazer
London Borough of Lewisham

Catherine McRory
Royal Borough of Greenwich

Examination Ref: 01/DAS/LNP

11 September 2023

Dear Ms McMichael, Mr Frazer and Ms McRory

LEE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Lee Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have a number of questions for the Lee Neighbourhood Forum (the Qualifying Body), the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the London Borough of Lewisham (the Councils), to which I would like to receive a written response(s) by **Friday 13 October 2023**.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received a complete submission of the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

Subject to my detailed assessment of the draft Plan, I have not at this initial stage identified any very significant and obvious flaws in the Plan that might lead me to advise that the examination should not proceed.

2. Site Visit

I will aim to carry out a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area in the week beginning 2 October 2023. The site visit will assist in my assessment of the draft Plan, including the issues identified in the representations.

The visit will be undertaken unaccompanied. It is very important that I am not approached to discuss any aspects of the Plan or the neighbourhood area, as this may be perceived to prejudice my independence and risk compromising the fairness of the examination process.

I may have some additional questions, following my site visit, which I will set out in writing should I require any further clarification.

3. Written Representations

At this stage, I consider the examination can be conducted solely by the written representations procedure, without the need for a hearing. However, I will reserve the option to convene a hearing should a matter(s) come to light where I consider that a hearing is necessary to ensure the adequate examination of an issue, or to ensure that a person has a fair chance to put a case.

4. Further Clarification

From my initial assessment of the Plan and supporting documents, I have identified a number of matters where I require some additional information from the Councils and the Qualifying Body.

I have four questions seeking further clarification and information, which I have set out in the Annex to this letter. I would be grateful if you can seek to provide a written response(s) by **Friday 13 October 2023**.

5. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is to examine the Plan (including conduct of the site visit) with a view to providing a draft report (for 'fact checking') within 6-8 weeks of submission of the draft Plan. However, as I have raised four questions, I must provide you with sufficient opportunity to reply. Consequentially, the examination timetable will be extended. Please be assured that I will aim to mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. The IPE office team will seek to keep you updated on the anticipated delivery date of the draft report.

If you have any process questions related to the conduct of the examination, which you would like me to address, please do not hesitate to contact the office team in the first instance.

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure that a copy of this letter is placed on the Neighbourhood Forum and the Councils' websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

Derek Stebbing

Examiner

ANNEX

From my initial reading of the Lee Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021-2031 and the supporting evidence, I have the following questions for the Qualifying Body and the Councils. I have requested the submission of responses **by Friday 13 October 2023**, though an earlier response would be much appreciated. All of the points set out below flow from the requirement to satisfy the Basic Conditions.

Question 1: Re. Table 2 – Green Space Designations (Pages 40-42)

Can the **Councils** please confirm that the status and designation of the Green Spaces for their respective Boroughs, as listed in the 4th column of this table, is correct.

Can the **Councils** also please advise me whether the proposed additional designations of various sites within each Borough, as listed in the 5th column of this table, would be supported in relation to the relevant Local Plan open space policies and typologies.

Question 2: Re. Policy TC2 (Pages 58/59)

The Transport for London (TfL) representations made at the Regulation 16 consultation stage state that the Plan should identify the ‘strategic neighbourhood routes’ referenced in clause 4 of this Policy.

I have been unable to identify the routes in question, and they are not shown on Figure 8 (page 56).

Can the **Qualifying Body** please provide me with a suitable map that identifies the ‘strategic neighbourhood routes’ which I can consider as a potential modification to the Plan.

Question 3: Re. Section 4.3.6.1 and Table 4 (Pages 75 and 77)

I confirm that I shall take into account the Joint Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) (dated 20 July 2023) that has been prepared in response to matters raised by the Councils at the Regulation 16 consultation stage.

With regard to the Housing Site Allocations contained in the Plan (which are all within the London Borough of Lewisham), I note that they are to be regarded as ‘design-led site allocations’ and that the SoCG identifies a significant number of proposed amendments to the text of the proposed site allocations (SA01-SA12) set out between pages 81 and 104 in the draft Plan, including the deletion of certain sites from the Plan (e.g. Site SA04).

In order that I may consider the full extent of the revisions identified in the SoCG (at pages 26-32), and to significantly reduce the number of potential modifications to the Plan, I invite the **Qualifying Body** to provide me with draft amended content for Section 4.3.6.1, Figure 11, Table 4 and each of the Site Allocations to be retained in the Plan, which I may consider as a potential consolidated modification to the Plan. I shall wish to see appropriate text within Section 4.3.6.1 that the site allocations are to be design-led, with appropriate references to the relevant design guidance and Policies that will assist users of the Plan in considering development proposals for the sites.

I confirm that I shall visit each of the sites during the course of my site visit to the Plan area.

Question 4 – Re. Sustainable Development

The draft Plan notes, at paragraph 1.2, that the Plan “... will help to create a cohesive, healthy and sustainable environment ...”.

However, as drafted, I consider that the Plan does not presently contain a sufficiently clear statement which addresses the national requirement to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, as it applies to the Plan area.

I therefore invite the **Qualifying Body** to consider providing some suitable text in order to address this point for inclusion in Section 3 (possibly as an extension of paragraph 3.2) which I may consider as a potential modification to the Plan.