

7. Education and training

Discussions with the Head Teacher of Deptford Park Primary school at the public sector stakeholders meeting revealed that primary capacity is available, but needs to be assessed and allocated across borough boundaries. There is perceived to be a problem with local secondary place provision, and the opportunity to provide additional places alongside new development was welcomed. However, there were concerns from both the residents and public and voluntary sector groups that new residential development would not be met with adequate and appropriately phased provision.

Employment training facilities were mentioned by many groups at the residential workshops, in relation to job prospects, aspirations and as a means of reducing crime. The public sector group recommended provision of a one-stop resource centre which could offer training and employment advice to all age groups, along with other learning and skills activities. Such programmes could be targeted at young people who had left school without finishing their education, the unemployed and the homeless. Residents, businesses and the public sector wanted to see greater linkage between local businesses and local training schemes to ensure that local skills match job opportunities. Jobs delivered by

new development could be accompanied by job training schemes funded through Section 106 agreements. Residents at the estates workshops reported high levels of truancy and felt that programmes to ensure better attendance levels should accompany provision of any additional facilities, and that such facilities would need to be effectively promoted to ensure an adequate level of uptake by the community.

Young teenagers were thought to be particularly in need of such training and facilities, especially those which might offer manual and vocational skills. Equally however, IT literacy and computer training was thought essential in equipping younger people for the modern job market.





8. Housing

The Greater London Authority London Plan currently gives the borough of Lewisham a housing target of approximately 1,000 new homes per year. The Council has estimated that some 20,000 new homes could be provided in the borough by 2025 and 9,000 of these could be located in Deptford and New Cross.

There are several sites, currently designated employment sites, which could provide very sustainable locations for some of these homes as part of mixed-use schemes. The consultation therefore aimed to elicit reactions to residential-led mixed-use growth in North Deptford, and to pick up any other improvements which residents felt necessary regarding housing standards in the area.

At the deliberative event Housing was seen as a real priority for the area. When asked what they thought to be the priority for development in the area, via IML voting, more than two thirds chose housing (68%). This greatly outweighed those who opted for commercial properties, cafes/restaurants and transport.

However, it became evident during discussions that by Housing residents were thinking specifically about their own blocks and personal living space. It was strongly felt that before attention could turn to new housing, that people's own houses require a concerted "sprucing up." The two key drivers for this were; residual pride in their estate and surrounding area and; a personal desire to have a better home to improve their own quality of life. Hence, discussions tended to focus upon interiors (such as kitchen and bathroom refurbishments) and the exterior and safety of the building as a whole.

Participants were generally focused on their own block and their personal living space. They drew on their own experience of internal issues such as damp in their bathrooms or poor heating. There was also mention of a lack of consistency in the way local authorities conducted improvements. While some homes had recently been improved, others were waiting for changes that had been promised some time ago. For example, some Eddystone Tower and Harmon House residents said that they had been waiting for their kitchen to be refurbished for twelve years.

A few residents felt that the Council had the wrong priorities for making improvements – hanging baskets

and repainted doors, for example, were not where money had been best spent. Residents felt that it was important that they be involved in the decision making processes about how money was spent in the local area to ensure that improvements were what they most needed and wanted. Another potential improvement mentioned by participants was giving ground floor flats a small garden area so that older people could spend time outside without needing to travel to a nearby communal area. This was seen as particularly relevant as these ground floor flats prioritised people with mobility problems who might not be able to travel far outside of their home:

“My mother lives on the ground floor and you should see the state of it outside her kitchen window. Everyone just dumps their rubbish. It’s disgusting.”

(Resident with an elderly mother living in a nearby block)

Relating to concerns about safety, improvement to the

security systems within blocks was deemed a priority by many. It was felt that the entry systems to some blocks did not work properly, meaning that people could easily enter (particularly younger people) and “get up to no good.” One group from the Trinity Estate discussed how young people from other estates that got into their blocks and became disruptive, for example by smoking and urinating in stairwells and being noisy. Ill-functioning lifts and the general appearance of stairwells were often mentioned as things which needed improvement.

There was also a clear difference between blocks where the caretaker lived in the block and was therefore felt to have a vested interest in keeping it clean and hospitable, and those with external caretakers who could feel neglected. One way in which residents felt that the blocks could be improved, both cosmetically and security-wise, was the introduction (or re-instatement) of a security officer and maintenance person who would be responsible for their home.

Whilst people felt that there were things which were more important than superficial improvements to the housing blocks, cosmetic improvements to the current housing blocks would help to give people a sense of

pride in the community. Blocks were described as “run-down” and “depressing” by many residents. One participant felt that the blocks “just need a facelift”; another that their block “just wants rejuvenating.” Residents on Pepys Estate said that “the [recent] facelift to Pepys has made a difference,” allowing people to take more pride in the area. This was seen as one of the main ways in which the Estate had been improved.

It was difficult for residents to get past their more pressing needs for their own homes before they could conceive of spending money on building new homes:

“I need to feel proud of where I live before I can think about these new developers.”

“Yes, why would any business invest money here now? You need to improve what we’ve got before you can attract businesses in.”

(Deliberative workshop participants)



Although there was some concern that there would not be enough housing in the future for their families, most were suspicious about plans to build new homes. The reasons for this were:

- An inherent misconception that investment into new homes and developments was instead of investment into improvements to their own blocks. Even when challenged on this there was low acceptance of new developments as a facilitator for greater investment into the area: “that’s what we pay Council tax for!”
- Perceptions that the area is already too crowded - “you try getting onto Evelyn Street during rush hour – the last thing we need is more people living here” - were accompanied by concerns over who the new homes would attract being either;
- “Rich people,” who would not want to be involved in the community, such as those who live in Aragon Tower;
- ‘Poor’ people moving into social housing would just perpetuate the cycle of poverty and do little to improve the area.

This has a clear implication of reactions to regeneration plans; for many the priority is (cosmetic) improvements to both the interior and exterior of blocks before they are able to conceive of new developments. Whilst not directly articulated, there was an evident fear that their direct housing needs would be over-looked and both they and their estates forgotten.

An interesting side point participants raised was that the allocation of housing was often inappropriate. They felt that sometimes homes were not well matched to people’s needs and that it was difficult to move. One woman in the group wanted to move into a smaller flat but had been told that it is not possible. In addition, some people felt that those who paid rent were given priority social housing tenants, thereby meaning that residents were unable to secure housing for themselves and their families in the local area if they could not afford to pay rent.

Maintenance

Whilst not itself the core topic area for this consultation/engagement process, maintenance still attracted a huge response from local people at

the estates based workshops – management and maintenance of communal areas (particularly lifts) and gardens. The public and voluntary stakeholders group suggested that Lewisham Council, Developers and RSLs should meet to discuss capital funding which could come out of Section 106 agreements to provide a maintenance trust. This should happen before development takes place, to allow future revenue needs to be estimated and realistic budgets set.

Residential growth

However, there were also more in depth discussions around the impact of additional homes on North Deptford. Many were concerned at the scale of proposals in general, and tower blocks were unpopular for the visual impact they could have of North Deptford’s local character, particularly along the river front. Some thought that tower blocks were unsuitable for families altogether, but that proper provision of parks could help provide for their open space needs. Others were concerned at the impact of increased densities on local facilities and services, particularly secondary schools.





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9. Business facilities and employment

Local businesses are clustered around the Evelyn Street Triangle, along Evelyn Street and at the Cannon Wharf Business Centre. At the residents' workshops, residents were asked what business facilities and employment types North Deptford required. There were also two business workshops, held with the Triangle Street Traders and the Cannon Wharf Businesses to discuss business issues more closely.

At the deliberative event a lack of suitable employment in the area for local residents was seen as an important issue that needed to be addressed. During the deliberative workshop participants discussed the plans to bring businesses into the area; many saw it as a priority that jobs were made available for local residents rather than simply for outsiders to come in. This relates to the overriding theme that residents want changes that will have an immediate and tangible impact on their own lives rather than general improvement of quality of life across the area.

For many, this was especially related to local people not being able to use the skills that they have. A solution to this was thought to be better use of local skills in the community, for example, using local people to do some of the much desired refurbishments. Many

bemoaned the need to travel far outside the area to find appropriate work. One participant, for example, travelled to Slough on a daily basis.

Again, this issue was closely linked to that of inspiring the young people within the community. However, while many focus on the vicarious pursuit of greater opportunities for their children and young people in the area, it was evident that older residents (i.e. parents) also need greater motivation and opportunities. The challenge will be to inspire aspirations amongst those who have very much reached a comfort level that precludes investment into their own development rather than merely that of their children.

Local jobs

At the residents' workshops there was a consensus that a greater number and wider range of jobs were needed. Unemployment was identified as a major issue locally, and residents were concerned that existing employment opportunities, particularly manual jobs, were not going to local people. A number of measures were suggested to address this, including quotas and incentives for local employers to use local employees,

and training programmes to improve job accessibility. The public sector group shared their concerns, suggesting that there is a need to protect existing employment sites, identify local enterprise potential, and provide local jobs for local people which give people a decent income and match local skills, such as training in catering.

Response to LDF options

Regarding the LDF issue of redesignation of employment sites in the area, residents didn't want to see a net loss of jobs in the area, but were broadly supportive of change that would bring a wider range of job types to the area – construction jobs, commercial jobs, the evening economy and creative industries. They did want to ensure, however, that job prospects from these would be accompanied by training programmes to ensure local employment.

The Businesses groups were broadly supportive of mixed-use redevelopment of the key sites due to the improvements this could bring to the area in terms of improvements to the public realm, local image and greater vibrancy in the area. The Triangle Traders,

though, were concerned that current proposals do not offer enough commercial uses. They also saw Convoys Wharf as a threat to local businesses in the Evelyn Street Triangle and suggested that it needed to become more of a destination to compete. This could be aided by a Sunday Market in the area and support for local shops who rely on immediately local customers.

The Cannon Wharf Businesses agreed that there was a lack of office space in Lewisham in general, but felt that North Deptford is an ideal location for them due to its proximity to the City but relatively good value rents. This group were keen to ensure that development delivers high quality business spaces, set in an attractive environment, with secure premises, ample parking and built-in training spaces. The group were very supportive of workspace development as part of mixed use due to the vibrancy that the residential element can bring.



10. Summary and Recommendations

This programme of consultation consisted of a deliberative event targeted at an audience reflective of North Deptford's socio-economic profile, supplemented by a number of workshops which were aimed at key local residents groups and stakeholders. It revealed a number of recurring themes and issues, shared by different groups for different reasons. This section draws out the headline priorities for each group at this point in time and from their own perspective, which will assist the Council with ongoing and future negotiation with developers of sites in the North Deptford area. It will also help the Council make strategic and key local decisions on how to improve the provision of local services and allocate resources.

The following sections summarise the headline views expressed by the major groups consulted:

Residents

- Traffic flow improvements, particularly on Evelyn Street, and adequate parking for residents;
- Public realm improvements to enhance North Deptford's local environment and image;
- Maintenance of residential buildings to decent homes standards;
- Improved safety and maintenance of security equipment;
- Upgrades to existing green spaces and provision of new public spaces as part of any new development;
- In the medium to long term, provision of a greater choice of retail, community and leisure facilities, and establishment of revenue funding streams to maintain existing facilities; and
- Celebration of heritage assets to enhance local identity and pride in the local environment

Public and Voluntary Stakeholders

- Delivery of health and education services to meet current and future need;
- Provision of new youth and community facilities, funded by S106 through long-term funding arrangements such as a trust providing revenue; and
- Use of this report to inform anti-social behaviour and housing and safety strategies at Lewisham, facilitated by a meeting of heads of service at the Council at which the report is presented.



Businesses

- Public realm and business space improvements to make businesses centres more attractive to employees and shoppers, and therefore more competitive; and
- More employment in the area as part of any new proposals, and measures to ensure that local people have best access to it.

Youth

- Improved youth facilities and youth activities in the area;
- Wider choice of shops to serve the local area;
- Improved reliability of public transport, particularly regarding traffic congestion; and
- Improved green spaces with more leisure suitable for young people.

LDF options

All groups were generally supportive of regeneration and growth in North Deptford, although most had reservations which would have to be addressed at the same time. Residents were supportive of change which will bring a wider range of job prospects, so long as these are accompanied by appropriate training programmes. There was also considerable support for removal of industrial sites, particularly the Oxestalls Road site, due to the adverse impacts these uses have on the local residential environment in terms of pollution and traffic.

The public and voluntary sector workshop group was supportive of residential growth in the area, but had concerns about its impacts on local services, especially education and health.

The Cannon Wharf Businesses were supportive of redevelopment of employment sites for mixed use due to the vibrancy this would bring to the area, and the Triangle Traders were supportive of growth, so long as it included an adequate proportion of commercial uses to meet local need, and was accompanied by measures to help the Triangle Traders compete with new retail

development.

There was broad support for regeneration and growth among young people at the youth workshop, with many feeling that improvement could be delivered through long-term change.

Community benefits from major sites

- New pedestrian and cycle connections along the River Thames from Surrey Quays to Greenwich;
- New pedestrian and cycle connections to the River from Evelyn Street;
- New links through to Surrey Quays from Oxestalls Road via the Cannon Wharf sites;
- New uses on the Oxestalls Road site replacing the heavy industry and bring vibrancy to the area, particularly along Grove Street; and
- New community and shopping uses at the Convoys Wharf Site and a large public space, reusing historic buildings in the area.

Parks and open space

- Improvements to many of the greenspaces in the area, not just Pepys Park, with tidying, better security, maintenance and more planting as a short term measure; and
- In the long term, delivery of more leisure facilities and well organised activities to ensure that the parks are used much more by the local community.

Recommendations

Movement Traffic and Transport

Grove Street

For many residents, the poor quality of the pedestrian environment was the central point of concern. Much discussion with residents revolved around the importance of Grove Street. In the context of the major development sites in the area, a major opportunity to radically improve the environmental quality of Grove Street emerges. Grove Street is the key pedestrian link between Surrey Quays shopping centre and Deptford town centre.

Whilst there is concern about the already busy nature of Evelyn Street, the priority for local people in the context of potentially very significant local housing development is for a safe and attractive environment. It will therefore be important to seek to ensure that Grove Street is not seen as a through route. By continuing to focus vehicular movement along the Evelyn Street corridor, the Grove Street environment, particularly the central section opposite the Lower

Pepys Park, could become the focus of a major public realm investment programme with the aim of anchoring the Grove Street area as the heart of the community.

Public transport – bus routes

In terms of public transport links, there was support for Lewisham investigating improved links between North Deptford and Greenwich. Local bus services are critical in ensuring local people have good access to local community services and employment opportunities. There was an aspiration for new services (potentially ‘hoppers’) linking the area more directly with the nearby centres of New Cross and Peckham, and for new local bus routes connecting local streets into the network, ideally running through Grove Street.

Evelyn Street

Traffic congestion along Evelyn Street was clearly a priority for residents in North Deptford. Evelyn Street is a strategic route controlled by TfL, giving the Borough limited scope to influence its management and control. It should also be noted that during the consultation major road works were being undertaken on the route. However, working closely with TfL, there

may be scope for the Council to, through publicity and communication, help ensure that local residents and other stakeholders are better informed about the timescales and aims of traffic works, as well as measures being taken at a wider scale and by national bodies, to improve traffic flow in the North Deptford and south east London.

Long term

Should industrial sites be redeveloped for mixed and residential uses, in the longer term, pressure will grow significantly on the current transport network, requiring major transport improvements. The Council will therefore need to consider major transport improvements alongside measures to address current issues.

Physical Environment and Open Space

Short term

Residents were clear that improvements to North Deptford’s physical environment, its streets and public spaces, would have a direct impact on their everyday lives. Physical improvements could help address a

number of issues including crime and safety, under-use of communal spaces and lack of pride in the local area. Landscape improvements could present a cost-effective and high impact intervention – and could therefore represent an important quick win for the Council. Communication of existing landscaping initiatives would inform residents of the Council’s current plans.

Resources are already allocated to making improvements to the Pepys Estate but the Council should consider the benefits of widening the brief for these resources. Street lighting and the provision of safer routes was a high priority for local residents and such improvements appeared to have a higher priority than the improvement of the area’s open spaces.

Getting local youth groups involved in the process of designing the planned improvements to the area’s open spaces should ensure greater value to them is given by local people thus reducing the likelihood of vandalism.

Long term

In the longer term, Lewisham should focus on maintenance and regular tidying of public and green spaces, including the revenue streams needed to fund this.

The issue of rubbish and fly tipping was also raised, and could be given further consideration as a Borough-wide policy issue.

New pedestrian and cycle routes should be a high priority in any redevelopment opportunities, particularly the chance to extend the Thames path from Surrey Quays to Greenwich, and other new routes between Evelyn Street and the River through potential development sites.

Crime and Safety

Many of the crime issues identified by participants related to maintenance issues. As with the public realm, the Council should investigate long-term measures to ensure sustained revenues for regular repair and upkeep of security provision, such as CCTV and lighting. In addition, it would be useful to establish links between local Wardens and landscape professionals as part of any landscaping improvement initiatives to establish how design could help reduce perception and likelihood of crime.

Much criminal activity was linked to a perceived lack of

youth provision in the area. Links should be promoted between youth organisations and representatives such as the Riverside Youth Club and local police and Wardens to investigate activities and initiatives which would help reduce crime through structured activity.

Community and Youth Facilities

Youth provision was a very high priority at all the consultation events and should therefore be a key focus for action, support and investment.

The single most common request regarding community provision was for increased funding to existing youth facilities. Lewisham Council should consider ways of increasing and sustaining revenue funding to existing and any new youth facilities to ensure that they are effective within the community. The Riverside Youth Club has strong links with local young people and these links should be utilised by other community agencies to encourage greater youth participation and constructive ownership of North Deptford.

Participants were also keen to see greater provision of community leisure facilities for older groups. This could

come in the form of new events at existing venues, potentially including the Riverside Youth Club and the 2000 Community Action Centre.

There will be significant investments made in the redevelopment of key sites in the area. These proposals are likely to include health and community facilities for residents. Consideration should be given to securing (limited) access for local people to any health/leisure facilities provided in the redevelopment of the major sites in the area.

In the longer term, additional community facilities, for example, a library, art gallery or fitness club, could be provided as part of redevelopment of the opportunity sites.

Community integration was a common concern regarding the opportunity sites. A starting point to address this, as suggested by participants themselves, would be to establish more community events, for example, farmers markets and festivals. These events would need to be firmly community-led, with the Council in a supporting role, in order to ensure ownership and buy-in from the local community.

In the long term, it will be crucial to ensure that new development is properly integrated with the existing landscape in terms of physical routes and character. This could be addressed through design briefs for major sites.

Education and training

Planning controls to deliver local training and employment

Provision of employment and training was a key concern, and further debate could usefully be established on ways in which existing employment opportunities are offered out. Given the construction opportunities presented by the major opportunity sites, there is a short-medium term opportunity to bring significant levels of work to the area, secured and controlled through the planning process.

Housing

Local perceptions and communication

The state of existing housing on the estates was a major issue at the deliberative event and at the estates workshops, and should therefore be seen as a high priority for the Council. Whether or not there is scope to address this directly through the redevelopment of privately owned sites will need consideration. However, there was a strong sense of resentment that the Council was spending or making money on the redevelopment of these sites at the expense of those who already live in poor quality housing. This is a communications issue.

Some cosmetic improvements to these areas could have great impacts for local people and significantly improve their quality of life. As with other issues, funding may be at the root of these problems, but it would be worth establishing further debate on the issue of poor living conditions, and on the future of the buildings themselves. Contacts with local residents made during this consultation could be followed up to establish a focus group to this end.

Business facilities and employment

In terms of new job provision in North Deptford, there was all round support for new employment uses and rationalisation of existing heavy industrial uses. However, the overarching concern in this regard was how provision of new employment in the area could meet the needs of the local population. This will clearly need further consideration in terms of the economic viability, necessary skills programmes which could accompany new physical development and further consultation with local employers and residents would be very valuable in this regard.

Affordable employment space was mentioned as just as important as affordable housing.



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Appendices

Glossary of terms

Affordable Housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision (Annex B PPS3)

Comparison Retailing is the provision of items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.

Convenience Retailing Convenience retailing is the provision of everyday essential items, including food, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery.

Core Strategy A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision and strategic objectives of the planning framework for the area, in line with the

Sustainable Community Strategy.

Development Plan Document (DPD) A Local Development Document that has been subject to independent testing and has the weight of development plan status. Replaces the Local Plans system.

Infrastructure The utilities, transport and other communication facilities and community facilities required to support housing, industrial and commercial activity, schools, shopping centres and other community and public transport

Issues and Options and Preferred Options The ‘pre-submission’ consultation stages on Development Plan Documents with the objective of gaining public consensus over proposals ahead of submission to government for independent examination.

Local Development Document (LDD) Sits within the LDF portfolio and comprise Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that have been subject to independent testing and have the weight of development plan status and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which are not subject to independent testing and do not have development plan status.

Local Development Framework (LDF) The Local Development Framework is a portfolio, or a ‘folder’, of local development documents which will provide the local planning authority’s policies for meeting the community’s economic, environmental and social aims for the future of there area where this affects the development and use of land.

Regeneration The process of improving urban areas through a number of different initiatives addressing social, economic of physical issues. These can include environmental enhancements, refurbishment, redevelopment and provision of new services, infrastructure or economic, educational and social programmes.

Section 106 (s106) Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority (LPA) to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation, with a land developer over a related issue. The obligation is sometimes termed as a ‘Section 106 agreement’. Such agreements can cover almost any relevant issue and can include sums of money.