

November 2023

Lewisham Local Plan: Submission Stage FAQs

1. Introduction

The following seeks to provide colleagues serving within Lewisham Council’s customer facing teams with a series of frequently asked questions and answers that may be encountered within enquiries relating to the new Lewisham Local Plan 2040. The answers to the anticipated questions seek to either provide information that serves as a definitive response and concludes the enquiry, or channel shift to other internal or external sources – the latter typically via hyperlinks.

2. Context

What is the new Lewisham Local Plan?

Lewisham Council is preparing a new Local Plan that covers the whole of the Borough. The latest version of [the new Local Plan is available on the Council’s website](http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myserVICES/planning/policy/planning/current-and-future-consultations) which can be found at www.lewisham.gov.uk/myserVICES/planning/policy/planning/current-and-future-consultations.

This is the Council key planning policy document. It is also a key piece of corporate policy. The new Local Plan sets out a Borough-wide spatial development strategy that will inform the Council’s decision-taking, on new development and infrastructure, up till 2040. It sets out how much new development, including how much new housing, employment land, retail provision, open space, transport infrastructure and other community information has to be built to meet the Borough’s needs. Critically it also sets out where future development will be located and how it all fits together with the infrastructure networks that will support it once it has been built.

The new Local Plan will contribute towards meeting many of the Council’s corporate priorities including –

- Delivering new, high-quality homes, including genuinely affordable homes, to help tackle the housing crisis and meet our target of delivering 28,000 new homes before 2038.
- Securing the delivery of new infrastructure that benefits the borough, including the Bakerloo Line extension.
- Creating a thriving local economy by growing Lewisham’s business base, supporting job creation and attracting investment into town centres
- Supporting sustainable development that helps to reduce carbon emissions, protect the environment and tackle the climate emergency.
- Protecting and enhancing green spaces in the borough and promoting biodiversity.

Why will customers be asking questions about the new Local Plan?

The new Lewisham Local Plan has been subject to the statutory plan-making process as set out in [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#). This has involved the Council undertaking several statutory public consultation exercises.

On 3 November 2023 the Council submitted the new Local Plan to the Secretary of State for the purpose of examination in public. The statutory requirements for this stage of the process are set out under Regulation 24. It is the culmination of engagement and consultation with residents, communities and partners undertaken through Regulations 18 and 19. The details of these previous stages of the process can be found on [the Council’s website](#).

As the previous stages of the process have involved engagement with residents, communities, businesses, and others with an interest in the future of the Borough, it is anticipated that the Council

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will receive customer enquiries seeking further information about the new Local Plan, the statutory process and how they can participate.

3. Frequently Asked Questions and Answers/ FAQs

Q1: Where can I find further information on the new Lewisham Local Plan?

Information on the new Lewisham Local Plan; what it is; how the Council has involved residents and communities; what information and evidence has been used to prepare the latest version; and what stage it is at in the statutory process, can be found on the Council's website - [Lewisham Council - Current and future consultations](#).

This includes information on where customers can inspect the new Local Plan and the associated documents submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.

Physical copies of the new local Plan, the consultation statement and other supporting documents will be available for physical inspection at the following locations from the 22 November 2023:

- London Borough of Lewisham, Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, London, SE6 4RU.
- Catford Library, Catford Centre, 23-24 Winslade Way, London, SE6 4JU.
- Deptford Lounge Library, 9 Giffin Street, London, SE8 4RJ.
- Grove Park Community Centre, Somertrees Avenue, London, SE12 0BX.
- Forest Hill Community Library, Dartmouth Road, London, SE23 3HZ.
- Downham Library, 7-9 Moorside Road, Bromley, BR1 5EP.

If you wish to inspect the documents at Laurence House, please make an appointment by emailing localplan@lewisham.gov.uk or calling 02083147400.

Information on Library opening times can be found at:

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/libraries/branches> or by calling 02083147400.

To learn more about how the Council will use your data please read our privacy notice

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/about-this-site/privacy/resources-regeneration/privacy-notice---planning>.

Q2: Who can I contact if I need further information on the content of the new Lewisham Local Plan?

Should customers need further information on the Lewisham Local Plan or any of its supporting documents then they can contact the Council's Planning Policy Team via:

- E-mail: localplan@lewisham.gov.uk; or
- Post: Planning Service, Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, London, SE6 4RU

Q3: What happens now that the new Local Plan has been submitted for examination and who can I contact to learn more?

The Council is not consulting on the Local Plan at this stage and has now submitted the new Local Plan to the Secretary of State for the purpose of examination in public. They are now responsible for the next stage of the process – not the Council.

The examination process will be presided over by an independent Planning Inspector, who is representing the Secretary of State. Local Plan Inspectors are appointed from the Planning Inspectorate, who are based in Bristol. They are entirely independent of Council. They will examine the new Lewisham Local Plan in respect of the legal plan-making requirements, the Duty to Co-

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operate, its general conformity with the London Plan, and the tests of soundness set out under the [National Planning Policy Framework](#).

The details of the submitted Plan, the examination process, the appointed Inspector, and the latest news will be found, as it becomes available, on [the Local Plan Examination webpage](#) which can be found here: www.localplanservices.co.uk/lewishamlocalplan.

An examination Programme Officer, Ian Kemp, has been appointed to manage and administer the process. They act as the intermediary between the independent Inspector and all of the participants, including the Council. Participants cannot contact the Inspector directly, neither can the Council – all communication goes through the Programme Officer. Their contact details are available from the Local Plan Examination webpage and are as follows –

Address: PO Box 241, Droitwich, Worcestershire, WR9 1DW

Email: ian@localplanservices.co.uk

Telephone: 07723009166

Q4: A customer has previously made representations to the Local Plan process, what can they expect to happen next? Do they need to do anything?

As part of the submission to the Secretary of State, the Council has provided copies of all of the representations submitted to the previous stages of the Local Plan process. Copies of these and the other Submission Documents can be viewed on [the Local Plan Examination webpage](#).

If a customer has submitted comments to the public consultation undertaken under Regulation 19, which took place during March – April 2023, they do not need to repeat or resubmit the comments that they have already made. Their comments have been passed in full to the Secretary of State/ the Local Plan Inspector, who will consider them as part of the examination process. They do not need to repeat these comments. Following the appointment of the Inspector, the Local Plan Examination Programme Officer will contact all who made comments to the Regulation 19 consultation stage, outlining the examination process, and asking them whether they wish to participate in the subsequent stages – notably in terms of responding to the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions, and the subsequent Hearing Sessions. Full details of what prospective participants can expect can be found on [the Local Plan Examination website](#) under the section setting out the Guidance Notes for the examination. This includes [Procedural Guidance for Local Plans](#) and [a Short Guide](#) for those taking part in an examination for the first time.

Customers are advised to contact the Programme Officer, Ian Kemp, directly if they should have any questions on the above.

Q4: When can prospective participants expect the publication of the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions? And when may they subsequently expect the Local Plan Examination Hearing Sessions to start?

As explained above, following submission of the Local Plan for examination the responsibility of the Local Plan effectively passes to the Secretary of State via the independent Inspector appointed to represent them through the process. Whilst the Council has advised the Secretary of State that it believes that the examination can be undertaken, completed and the Local Plan adopted within twelve months (by December 2024) – the ability to deliver on this ambition is entirely in their hands. The Council will work positively with the Secretary of State and their Inspector, via the Programme Officer, to meet this timetable.

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The [Procedural Guidance for Local Plans](#) sets out the stages of the examination process and when they may be progressed. On the basis of recent local plan examinations elsewhere, the Council believes that the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions may be published for responses during Spring 2024, with the Hearing Sessions following during June 2024. Customers are advised to contact the Programme Officer, Ian Kemp, directly if they should have any questions on this matter.

Q5: Can anyone attend and participate in the Local Plan Hearing Sessions?

If a customer has submitted comments to the public consultation undertaken under Regulation 19, which took place during March – April 2023, they do not need to repeat or resubmit the comments that they have already made. Their comments have been passed in full to the Secretary of State/ the Local Plan Inspector, who will consider them as part of the examination process. Those customers will be asked if they wish to respond to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions. They can respond to these specific questions – although they do not need to repeat what they may have already stated during the previous consultation under Regulation 19, as the Inspector will be taking account of their previous comments.

Prospective participants will be provided with the opportunity to attend and participate in the Local Plan Hearing Sessions. It is anticipated that these will be held in public at an appropriate venue to be agreed with the Inspector. The Inspector may determine to hold hybrid sessions if these are advantageous to the examination process.

The Local Plan Hearing Sessions are open to anyone to attend and observe. However, the ability for anyone attending the Hearing Sessions to speak and make verbal representations to the examination is entirely at the Inspector's discretion. The Inspector will preside over the Hearing Sessions in a quasi-judicial role and has the same powers to intervene and stop people from speaking. Further details on this subject will be available on [the Local Plan Examination website](#). Customers who have further questions on this matter are advised to contact the Examination Programme Officer.

Q6: When will the Inspector's Decision Letter be published? When may the new Local Plan be adopted?

Following submission of the Local Plan for examination the responsibility of the Local Plan effectively passes to the Secretary of State via the independent Inspector appointed to represent them through the process. Whilst the Council has advised the Secretary of State that it believes that the examination can be undertaken, completed and the Local Plan adopted within twelve months (by December 2024) – the ability to deliver on this ambition is entirely in their hands. The Council will work positively with the Secretary of State and their Inspector, via the Programme Officer, to meet this timetable.

The new Local Plan's progress through the examination will be reported on [the Local Plan Examination website](#). Customers are advised to contact the Programme Officer, Ian Kemp, directly if they should have any questions on the above.