

Leytonstone Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood are, in part, shaped by their built environment. The idea behind neighbourhood plans is to empower local people to have more control over their local built environment. They are designed to bring together diverse members of a community to identify what kinds of new development are right for their neighbourhood, and where, and to lay these ideas and priorities out in a plan. Provided this plan meets certain stipulations and is supported by the public through a vote, it gains legal force. This document provides some additional details on this process.

The Localism Act

Part of the current government's focus has been on Big Society: shifting power and responsibility back towards local people and local levels of government. A key aspect to this strategy is reforming the planning system to make it clearer, more democratic, and more effective. Neighbourhood planning has been an initiative of this.

Front Runner Projects

To facilitate the transition to neighbourhood planning, the DCLG has developed a Front Runner scheme. It is designed to develop a better understanding of challenges and best practices that can better form how future communities are supported in neighbourhood planning.

Leytonstone was selected as a Front Runner Project by the DCLG in Wave 4, along with 35 other neighbourhoods, in August 2011. At present, five waves of Front Runners have been selected, totalling 233 neighbourhoods nationally. Leytonstone joins 11 other London communities who are also Neighbourhood Plan Front Runners:

- Hackbridge, London Borough of Sutton (Wave 1)
- Bermondsey, London Borough of Southwark (Wave 1)
- Bankside, London Borough of Southwark (Wave 2)
- Markham Square, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (Wave 3)
- Edmonton, London Borough of Enfield (Wave 3)
- Highams Park, London Borough of Waltham Forest (Wave 4)
- South Bank, London Borough of Lambeth (Wave 5)
- Stamford Hill, London Borough of Hackney (Wave 5)
- Kentish Town, London Borough of Camden (Wave 5)
- Norland, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (Wave 5)
- Ealing Broadway, London Borough of Ealing (Wave 5)

Key Stages

1. Define the Neighbourhood

A Neighbourhood Forum of at least 21 members (residents, employees, or businesses) must be formed that is representative of a neighbourhood's diversity, which is approved by the local authority. The boundaries for the neighbourhood must also be established.

2. Prepare the Plan

The Neighbourhood Forum oversees the process of making the plan, and the public who lives within the boundaries are welcome to participate in the process. Plans can range from being very detailed to quite general.

3. Independent Check

The completed plan is checked by an independent examiner to make sure it adheres with some basic conditions:

- Be in line with national policies
- Be in line with local strategic policies
- Be compatible with EU obligations and adhere to human rights requirements
- Make a contribution towards sustainable development

4. Community Referendum

Once a plan is approved through the independent check, it is voted on by the neighbourhood represented by the plan. It must receive a majority of 50% + 1 vote to be approved.

5. Legal Force

Following a successful community referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan has legal force. Decision makers are obliged to consider the Neighbourhood Plan when making planning decisions.

Additional Resources

Legislation continues to evolve around Localism and Neighbourhood Plans, and resources continue to become available as more communities are involved. Some basic resources to start with from the Department for Communities & Local Government include:

- An introduction to neighbourhood planning, October 2011:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1985896.pdf>
- A plain English guide to the Localism Act, November 2011:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1896534.pdf>
- A short video on what neighbourhood planning could mean to you, April 2011:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/multimedia/newsroom/1878309>

For further information about the Leytonstone Neighbourhood Plan please contact our team on 0208 539 9325