



A neighbourhood plan for Lee
Monday 20 March, 7.30pm – 9.30pm
At Soul refresh Café, Leegate Centre

NOTES OF MEETING

1. Welcome and Introduction

An attendance list separate

Sarah McMichael, Lee Forum Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She introduced herself and the Lee Forum which is a neighbourhood forum set up a year ago with a committee of 10 people and run entirely by volunteers. Sarah explained the Forum's area and its remit. The Forum will develop policies relating to planning which will have the same legal strength as Council policies and will be adopted by Lewisham and Greenwich. Other benefits of the Forum were outlined, together with the restrictions on the Forum's activities and the progress made to date to establish an effective forum.

Projects for specific issues of interest can be undertaken outside the neighbourhood planning activity. However, it's important not to have too many distractions to delay the Forum's achievement of the core objective to develop the Neighbourhood Plan and have it adopted by the Councils.

All attendees were encouraged to volunteer to be involved in the work of the Forum.

Tony Burton and Kay Pallaris were introduced as consultants contracted to the Lee Forum for projects relating to the development of the Lee Neighbourhood plan.

2. Some facts about the Lee neighbourhood area

David Ford presented information on Lee under the following headings:

- The area boundaries incorporate two wards and three boroughs
- Population growth over the decades (now 26k)
- Demographics of the area
- Education and qualifications, skills and training of residents
- Employment rates (higher than average)
- Ethnic mix of residents
- Health and disability (83% of residents reported themselves to be in good health)
- Households and types of housing and barriers to housing and services
- Crime levels (higher than the national average and mixed across the area)
- Amenities were highlighted (numbers of schools, library, shopping and business parks, public transport, conservation areas, community and church halls)
- Pollution levels (high and above legal limits in some parts of the Lee Forum area)
- Living environment (better to the east than the west of the Lee Forum area)

3. Feedback from the community

The results of a recent survey were shared and the meeting was invited to provide feedback on their view of Lee.

Kay Pallaris summarised the Survey results as follows:

- 438 responses received
- Wide range of respondents in relation to the diversity of our community
- Features respondents liked about Lee were detailed as well as those elements that were less popular and areas for improvement
- In particular schools, the Leegate Centre and speeding and traffic were key features respondents wanted to see improved
- Top three issues were the IAG school, excessive traffic and improvement required to environmental standards

Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback and add to the responses received from the survey.

Responses to the question relating to the defining characteristics of Lee were reported and were added to during the course of the meeting.

Kay presented feedback from the recent walkabouts in seven distinct parts of the Lee Forum area.

The anonymised summary of the survey responses and the content of the Lee Forum officers' presentations will be made available on Lee Forum's website for further information.

4. Exercise: What makes Lee special

Tony Burton lead a session to enable participants to sum up in a sentence what they considered special about Lee.

5. Your map of Lee: What do you want protected, developed or better used?

On tables everyone gave their views on features that they wanted to protect in the area.

6. What can the neighbourhood plan do about the key issues

Tony Burton explained what other neighbourhood forums had done across England in the past five years since they had started to be established. 75% of local authorities and over 8 million participants are involved in neighbourhood planning initiatives. London boroughs have over 100 forums working and a number have cross-borough boundaries.

Forums need to prioritise activities to ensure they can achieve their objectives. A forum's remit is limited to planning issues and they can influence spending priorities with funds resulting from the community infrastructure levy (CIL).

Social infrastructure, green space and shops were three elements which had been identified to be given priority by a recent London-wide survey of forums. Examples of policies under these three priority areas which had been adopted in other areas were detailed to illustrate the sort of policies that Lee Forum could develop. For example a survey of shops can be carried out with types of retail offering identified and stipulations can be included in the neighbourhood plan about percentages of each type of outlet and where they should be located.

7. Exercise: Key issues for Lee

Participants were asked to cast their votes on the key issues identified as priorities for the Lee Forum by placing three stickers under the following headings:

sustainable transport, heritage, business start up, community facilities, make more of Quaggy, green space, pollution, design of new buildings, new school, other (cycle paths), local shops, traffic.

8. What next? – questions & discussion

Attendees raised questions and received comments and answers:

1. In relation to maintenance and preservation of about green spaces, there is no legislation or formula to be applied but there are guidelines
2. Negotiations relating to potential new cycle paths for the new school across a boundary required conversations with local authorities and other neighbourhood forums
3. – there is no policy yet relating to infill proposals as the Lee Forum is at the information gathering stage. Feedback will be synthesised and priorities drawn out. Unsympathetic infill building was an issue of concern to residents. Character and style of existing areas can be designated as areas of special interest and infill areas can be subject to design expectations
4. Lee High Road has been neglected and shop fronts aren't protected, it would be good if this could be improved (like East Dulwich which could become more of a lively hub and a preferred destination)
5. New tigers head cinema club etc and policies to assist community facilities would be welcomed
6. Examples like those above can be addressed by raising the level of aspiration through the Neighbourhood Plan in a joined-up cohesive way
7. It was clarified that Leegate is a district hub and not just a shopping centre and policies should be embraced in other areas, and in Leegate, to enhance the community facilities and address the constraints of traffic and crossroads location
8. Lewisham has an active plan with zonings and designations and Lee's Neighbourhood Plan will reflect this and will dovetail with existing local authority policies and the strategic intent of the Local Plan.
9. There was a discussion about the new IAG school. It was suggested that effective communications between the new school and the community was improved and channels to work together established to get the best outcome for the future of Lee. There is a tension with residents and parents in relation to the school. Sarah explained

that policies come into force when the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted following a thorough process and this will be too late for current applications, for example with the new school proposals and planning application. Some issues need to be resolved outside the Forum's remit. A planning application will trigger the debate with the community and conversations in advance can influence the design of the school, over which the Head has significant influence. The Head of the new IAG school welcomed all visitors at any time and said that the school is open to talk to the community right now.

10. Lee Green isn't very green!

Next steps were outlined as follows:

- a. Information will be uploaded on to the Lee forum website, including the anonymised results of the survey
- b. All feedback will be written up, categorised and circulated
- c. The Committee meeting before the end of March will draw conclusions from feedback received
- d. The Forum will identify ambition and vision for the area and determine how it can best be articulated
- e. Priorities will be identified
- f. Formal processes will follow from extensive consultation
- g. The Forum will continue to give feedback as information is gathered and the plans are refined and progressed.

9 Closing remarks

In addition to specific thanks to Lewisham Homes who had attended the meeting, Sarah McMichael thanked all participants for their contributions at the meeting and support for the work of the Forum.