

Cabinet Decision 5 February 2014	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Aman Dalvi – Corporate Director Development & Renewal	Classification: Unrestricted
Consideration of applications to establish Neighbourhood Planning Areas and Forums	

Lead Member	Councillor Rabina Khan
Wards affected	Shadwell St. Katharine's and Wapping Weavers
Community Plan Theme	Great Place to Live
Key Decision?	Yes

Executive Summary

The Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires the Council to consider applications made by community organisations to define Neighbourhood Planning Areas and establish Neighbourhood Planning Forums to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan and/or Neighbourhood Development Orders. The Council must formally designate or refuse to designate the Neighbourhood Planning Area and Forum.

This report provides information and recommendations regarding two submitted applications to establish Neighbourhood Planning Areas and Neighbourhood Planning Forums made under the TCPA 1990 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. These applications were submitted on or before 1 October 2013 by the following community organisations:

- East Shoreditch Neighbourhood Planning Forum
- Network Wapping

Application material can be found on the Council's Neighbourhood Planning consultation [webpage](#).

Recommendations:

In respect of the following applications, the Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

East Shoreditch Neighbourhood Planning Forum application:

1. Designate the submitted Neighbourhood Planning Area for East Shoreditch in its entirety for the area within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (shown on the plan attached at Appendix 1) pursuant to Section 61G of the Town and Country

Planning Act 1990.

2. Designate the East Shoreditch Neighbourhood Planning Forum as the Neighbourhood Planning Forum for the designated East Shoreditch Neighbourhood Planning Area within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets pursuant to Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Network Wapping application:

3. Refuse to designate the Neighbourhood Planning Area submitted by Network Wapping but designate part of the submitted area as the Wapping Neighbourhood Planning Area (shown on the plan attached at appendix 1) pursuant to Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the reasons stated in section 1 of this report.
4. Refuse to designate Network Wapping as the Neighbourhood Planning Forum for the designated Wapping Neighbourhood Planning Area pursuant to Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This is because there remains significant objection to the designation of Network Wapping as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum demonstrating a lack of community cohesion in terms of leadership for neighbourhood planning such that the Council is not satisfied that the proposed forum are representative of the local community to an extent that will lead to successful neighbourhood planning within the Wapping area.

1. **REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The reasons are based on an assessment of each application and consultation responses. Neighbourhood Planning Areas and Forums were considered separately.

East Shoreditch Neighbourhood Planning Forum

Neighbourhood Planning Area

- 1.2. The proposed Area is focused around the Boundary Estate with a portion also within the London Borough of Hackney. The proposed Forum has provided a clear map and comprehensive explanation of how the Area has been defined using a sound spatial planning and urban design methodology that acknowledges the physical, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the Area. As such the Area is considered to accord with Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 1.3. In addition the Area does not include any Local Plan site allocations and is considered consistent with the delivery of Local Plan and London Plan strategic planning policies.

Neighbourhood Planning Forum

- 1.4. The proposed Forum has engaged extensively with planning officers during the preparation of the application which has resulted in a robust submission using the Council's application form. The application to establish the Neighbourhood Planning Forum has been assessed in relation to the criteria stated within Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990:

Criteria	Evidence
The Forum is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of an extensive amount of detailed information to demonstrate how the Forum will promote and improve each of these elements while helping to deliver Council priorities and engaging with other local forums.
The Forum's membership is open to individuals who live in the neighbourhood area, individuals who work there and individuals who are elected members for the area;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed demonstration of undertaking extensive inclusive community engagement activities and events with central government support. • Written constitution enables ongoing open membership. • Commitment to monitoring of membership using demographic data.
The Forum's membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom live in the area, work in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of 21 members providing interests, relevant background and postcodes of each

area or are elected members for the area;	individual. This depicts a membership from different locations within the Area and from different sections of the diverse local community which represents the character of the Area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete membership totals 60 individuals.
The Forum has a written constitution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution has been developed with central government support and is considered to be appropriate to meet the ongoing needs of the Forum.

- 1.5. In light of the assessment described above, planning officers consider that the application to establish a Neighbourhood Planning Forum has successfully and comprehensively demonstrated that it meets the requirements of Section 61F(5) and enabled the Council to have regard to the elements defined in 61F(7) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and the Tower Hamlets Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note (2013).

Network Wapping

Neighbourhood Planning Area

- 1.6. The proposed Area of the application as depicted in appendix 1 is focused south of the DLR / National Rail line and north of the River Thames within Wapping and the surrounding areas. The proposed Forum has provided a map with a limited description of the area.
- 1.7. The proposed Area includes the Local Plan London Dock site allocation which is located towards the centre of the proposed area.
- 1.8. The proposed Area also includes St. Katharine Docks. The Friends of St. Katharine Docks, alongside residents, have strongly objected to the inclusion of the area. As the Friends of St. Katharine Docks are the representative group for the St. Katherine Docks area, officers recommend that St. Katharine Docks are removed from the proposed Neighbourhood Planning Area. Officers consider the resulting boundary would offer a clear definition between the local character of St. Katharine Docks and the Wapping Neighbourhood Planning Area.
- 1.9. The proposed Area also seeks to include areas to the north of the Highway. Consultation respondents have strongly objected to the inclusion of this area stating that this area is not perceived to be a part of Wapping and should be excluded. As such, officers recommend that the area north of the Highway is removed from the proposed Neighbourhood Planning Area. Officers consider the resulting boundary would offer a clear definition between the local character of Wapping Neighbourhood Planning Area and areas to the north.
- 1.10. In accordance with Section 61G(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to designate an amended boundary, the Council is required to firstly refuse the

submitted application and then designate the Neighbourhood Planning Area. The amended Neighbourhood Planning Area as recommended for approval is depicted in appendix 1.

Neighbourhood Planning Forum

1.11. The proposed Forum has engaged extensively with planning officers during the preparation of the current and previous application. This has resulted in a coherent submission using the Council’s application form. The application to establish the Neighbourhood Planning Forum has been assessed in relation to the criteria stated within Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990:

Criteria	Evidence
The Forum is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of an area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information demonstrating how the Forum will promote and improve each of these elements while helping to deliver Council priorities and engaging with other local forums.
The Forum’s membership is open to individuals or live in the neighbourhood area, individuals who work there and individuals who are elected members for the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed demonstration of undertaking extensive inclusive community engagement activities and events with Central government support. • Written constitution enables ongoing open membership.
The Forum’s membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom live in the area, work in the area or are elected members for the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of 34 members providing interests, relevant background and postcodes of each individual. This depicts a membership from different locations within the Area.
The Forum has a written constitution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution is considered to be appropriate to meet the ongoing needs of the Forum.

1.12. In light of the assessment described above, planning officers consider that the application to establish a Neighbourhood Planning Forum has successfully demonstrated that it meets the requirements of Sections 61F(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and the Tower Hamlets Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note (2013).

1.13. However, in accordance with Section 61F(7) of the Act (1990), the Council must have regard to whether the proposed Forum’s membership is drawn from different places, is from different sections of the community in the Neighbourhood Planning Area and whether the Forum’s purpose reflects the character of the Area.

1.14. The Forum has demonstrated through its application material that it has received substantial levels of support which includes support beyond the forum

membership. However, this is also joined by significant levels of consultation responses objecting to the proposal (detailed in the two Consultation Summary Reports in Appendix 2).

- 1.15. In line with the legislation an assessment as to whether the membership of the Forum is drawn from different sections of the community is required. As set out in the Consultation Summary Reports (appendix 2) the original application lodged by Network Wapping attracted 111 objections. Because of the high number of objections, Network Wapping asked for additional time to carry out further engagement with the community and during this period a further 39 objections were received (9 being resubmissions). The Council remained concerned about the level of opposition and as a result Network Wapping decided to withdraw their application. The current application was submitted by Network Wapping on 1 September 2013 and the Council carried out a new round of consultation. In the consultation documents the Council indicated that previous representations would be considered by the Council when the application was determined. Consultation on the second application attracted 43 objections (12 being resubmissions from the first consultation period). It should be acknowledged that a number of the objections related to the inclusion of St Katherine's Dock within the neighbourhood planning area, and as officers are recommending that the boundary of the area is altered to exclude this area, objections in this regard would be resolved.
- 1.16. A high level of objections does not on its own demonstrate that membership is not drawn from different sections of the community, but it is clear that there are opposing groups in the area and that not all of the community are represented by this group. Whilst it is not necessary for a forum to represent **all** sections of the local community (and this could be difficult to achieve) the high levels of objection in this case is a cause for concern particularly given that one of the main functions/powers of a forum is to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. It is clear that Network Wapping have sought to involve a cross section of the community in their forum and on balance it is considered that this requirement of the legislation is met. However, the consultation responses demonstrate a diversity of community opinion within Wapping relating to leadership for Neighbourhood Planning. This has raised concerns about the representativeness of the forum and its ability to respond to the diversity of community views. This is a matter of concern for the Council having regard to the function of a forum, which the Council would want to see delivered effectively and as efficiently as may reasonably be expected. There needs to be further local engagement activities to ensure that any forum that comes forward reflects the social character of the Area and has wider community support so that the Council can be satisfied that it is representative of the local community and will lead to successful neighbourhood planning within the Wapping area.
- 1.17. Officers are keen to ensure the sustainable implementation of Neighbourhood Planning within the Wapping area and are concerned that the significant level of opposition will be maintained and may result in a future Neighbourhood Plan failing to gain the necessary support in the required local referendum. The Council are only required to adopt a Neighbourhood Plan if in the applicable referendum, more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan. If a

neighbourhood development plan failed to gain the necessary support in a referendum this would result in an inefficient use of the Forum's and Council's resources that would be required to develop the Plan.

- 1.18. In light of the above, officers recommend that the designation of the Neighbourhood Planning Forum is refused. Further local engagement between relevant parties will be expected to deliver a Forum for the proposed amended Wapping Neighbourhood Planning Area that represents interested involved parties. Officers would expect Network Wapping to be involved in this process and support to bring the groups/interests together can be provided by the Council.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

East Shoreditch Neighbourhood Planning Forum

- 2.1 Given the comprehensive high level of quality of East Shoreditch Neighbourhood Planning Forum's application an alternative option was not considered necessary. Alternative options were considered for Network Wapping.

Network Wapping

- 2.2 The option for designating the Neighbourhood Planning Forum was considered and discounted because of concerns that this would not be conducive to community cohesion in terms of neighbourhood planning or lead to the successful adoption of neighbourhood planning in this area. Specifically, this would not have addressed the objections from the community and may constrain the delivery of a Neighbourhood Plan.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

Neighbourhood Planning Overview

- 3.1 The Localism Act (2011) amends the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) to enable communities to define Neighbourhood Planning Areas and establish Neighbourhood Planning Forums to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan and/or Neighbourhood Development Orders. The Council is required to facilitate the development of the neighbourhood planning process.
- 3.2 Neighbourhood Plans can only be developed by designated Neighbourhood Planning Forums. These Plans will likely provide planning policies for their defined area and could include planning policies, development principles for sites, community facilities and/or identify areas for public realm improvements. Neighbourhood Development Orders would exempt certain types of development, or development on a particular site, from requiring planning permission. Both these elements need to be in general conformity with the Council's 'Local Plan' (Core Strategy (2010) and Managing Development Document (MDD) (2013)), as well as the London Plan and will form a new spatial layer to the Council's planning policy. Once adopted, Neighbourhood Plans will form part of the Council's statutory 'Development Plan' (comprising the Local Plan and London Plan) and as such will hold significant weight in determining planning applications.

- 3.3 Applications to establish Forums and Areas are required by the Council to be submitted using the Council's local guidance note and application form.
- 3.4 Although the Council requires applications for both Neighbourhood Planning Forums and Areas to be submitted side-by-side, it is also able to designate only a Neighbourhood Planning Area and then determine whether a Forum should be designated at a later date.

Neighbourhood Planning Areas

- 3.5 As the Local Planning Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to determine applications to establish Neighbourhood Planning Areas. Neighbourhood Planning Areas can cover areas within Tower Hamlets and across borough boundaries with our neighbouring planning authorities of Hackney, Newham, London Legacy Development Corporation and the City of London. They can be any shape or size however only one Neighbourhood Planning Area can cover one location so there can be no overlapping.
- 3.6 Neighbourhood Planning Areas are initially defined by Neighbourhood Planning Forums and finalised by the Council. The Town and Country Planning Act provides the Council with a broad discretion in planning terms and requires the Council to:
- consider whether the Area is appropriate to be designated; and
 - designate all or part of the initially proposed Area (the Council cannot refuse to designate an Area outright).
- 3.7 Section 61G(5) of the Act requires the Council to refuse an application to establish a Neighbourhood Planning Area before proceeding to designate an amended boundary.
- 3.8 The Council is also able to modify existing boundaries when determining future applications to establish Neighbourhood Planning Forums.

Neighbourhood Planning Forums

- 3.9 As the Local Planning Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to determine applications to establish Neighbourhood Planning Forums and is required to provide technical and administrative support to prospective Forums.
- 3.10 The Localism Act sets out four criteria that prospective Neighbourhood Planning Forums need to meet if they are to be designated:
- (a) It is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of an area;
 - (b) Its membership is open to individuals who live in the neighbourhood area, individuals who work there and individuals who are elected members for the area;
 - (c) Its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom live in the area, work in the area or are elected members for the area;
 - (d) It has a written constitution.

- 3.11 The Act also requires the Council in determining whether to designate a neighbourhood forum to consider whether the:
- Forum has secured, or taken reasonable steps to secure, its membership includes people who live, work or represent the area;
 - Membership is drawn from different places in the area and different sections of the community in the area; and
 - Purpose of the Forum reflects the character of the area.
- 3.12 Section 61F of the Act provides guidance for the removal of designated Forums. Once designated, a Forum ceases to have effect after 5-years. The Council is also able to withdraw a designation where they consider that the body is no longer meeting the conditions by reference to which it was designated or any other criteria to which the authority were required to have regard in making the designation. Further information about withdrawing a body's designation is provided in Appendix 4.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 3.13 On 26 April 2013, the Government published the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (Amendment) Regulations (2013). This is supplemented by Community Infrastructure Levy Guidance Note (2013).
- 3.14 These two documents guide how CIL receipts can be used in relation to neighbourhood planning in areas with Parish Councils and those without. Tower Hamlets currently does not have any Parish Councils and as such the Council retains the revenue generated by CIL.
- 3.15 The Council may use 15% (capped at £100 per new home) or 25% (uncapped, if a Neighbourhood Plan or a Development Order has been adopted) of this revenue to support development in the Neighbourhood Area by funding:
- infrastructure (including improvements, replacement, operation or maintenance); or
 - anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the Area.
- 3.16 If the Council chooses to use this portion of the CIL revenue to fund the above two elements it should engage with recognised / appropriate community groups which may include any designated Neighbourhood Planning Forum.
- 3.17 On this basis any CIL revenue generated in the Neighbourhood Planning Area will be spent at the Council's discretion and there is no obligation on the Council to provide a Neighbourhood Planning Forum with CIL receipts.

Linkages within the Local Community Ward Forums

- 3.18 Council Planning officers have liaised with officers managing the implementation of the Local Community Ward Forums and Community Champions to ensure that the roles and activities of the two types of Forum are coordinated so far as possible.

- 3.19 Community Champions are included in the membership of each of the two proposed Forums discussed in this report.

Consultation overview

- 3.20 The Council is required to undertake a 6-week consultation period for the applications. This consultation process was carried out between 14 October to 25 November 2013. These consultation activities were undertaken in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Parts 5 and 6 and 8 and 9. Activities carried out were:
- Provision of consultation information and application material on the Council's website (www.towerhamlets.gov.uk).
 - Provision of consultation information and application material in local Idea Stores and libraries.
 - Provision of information to local elected Councillors.
 - Publication of a Public Notice in the Eastend Life newspaper.
- 3.21 A previous consultation period was undertaken for the Network Wapping application submitted on 1 April 2013 (subsequently withdrawn). An overview of the consultation responses for both periods are provided in the Consultation Summary Reports in appendix 2.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 This report asks the Mayor in Cabinet to consider a number of applications to establish Neighbourhood Planning Forums and associated Neighbourhood Planning Areas in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Localism Act.
- 4.2 The Council will have a duty to provide support and advice to the Area Forums which will incur additional administration costs, and these must be contained within existing budgets. The government has recently announced (in September 2013) that £7.5 million of funding will be made available and that local planning authorities will be able to claim for up to 20 area designations (£100,000) in both 2013/14 and 2014/15, and also claim for up to 5 forum designations (£25,000) in each financial year. Therefore, there is the potential for the Council to recover some costs, although the Borough will be in competition with other Authorities to secure these limited resources.
- 4.3 In certain circumstances Neighbourhood Development Orders would exempt certain types of development, or development on a particular site, from requiring planning permission (paragraph 3.1). If this is the case, the Authority will not receive a planning fee, although it will also not incur the costs of processing and determining the application. It is anticipated that the exemption will only relate to a limited number of smaller developments, so any reduction in planning fee income should be relatively minor, however the impact must be closely monitored once the new system is in place.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced through amendments made by the Localism Act 2011 to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (“TCPA 1990”). It is a powerful tool intended to allow local people to play a greater role in the planning system by being involved in selecting the right type of development for their community.
- 5.2 Section 61F of the TCPA 1990 provides that the Council may designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum if the authority is satisfied that it meets the conditions set out in subsection (5), which are listed in paragraph 3.10 of this report. The Council must also have regard to the matters set out in subsection (7) as detailed in paragraph 3.11 of this report.
- 5.3 It is considered that both forum applications meet the conditions and requirements set out in Section 61F, however, neither the TCPA 1990 nor the regulations deal with a situation such as that in Wapping where there are high levels of objection to an application for a neighbourhood forum and there is a clear division in terms of the desired leadership for neighbourhood planning. Because the Act provides that the Council ‘may’ designate a forum if it meets the conditions, it is considered that the Council has discretion whether or not to designate a forum, even though the statutory conditions have been met. The legislation does not specify in an exhaustive way the factors the Council may take into account when considering its discretion to designate, nor is there yet any judicial authority on the point. The reasons set out by officers to support their recommendation to refuse the Network Wapping application to become a neighbourhood forum take into account the representativeness of the group, its ability to reflect community views and the results of the consultation. On balance these appear to be relevant considerations to which the Council is entitled to have regard, even though the forum satisfies the basic requirement in the legislation (which the Council must consider) that the forum’s membership is drawn from different sections of the community.
- 5.4 The designation will have effect for a period of 5 years, unless the Council withdraws an organisation or body’s designation as a neighbourhood forum, because the organisation or body no longer meets the conditions or criteria set out. During this time, no other organisation or body can be designated as a neighbourhood forum for the area. The Council may only designate an organisation or body which has applied to be designated and may only designate one organisation or body for a neighbourhood area.
- 5.5 A neighbourhood forum will have the power to make a neighbourhood development plan for the area (or part thereof), neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders. Any neighbourhood development plan that comes forward will need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area. Any proposed plan will be subject to independent examination and if adopted following a referendum it will form part of the development plan for the area.
- 5.6 A neighbourhood area is an area which has been designated by the authority as a neighbourhood area on application to the Council. An application can be

made by a parish Council (where one exists) or a body which is capable of being designated as a neighbourhood forum.

- 5.7 Pursuant to Section 61G of the TCPA 1990 where a valid application for a neighbourhood area is made to the Council and some or all of the area has not been designated as a neighbourhood area, the Council have a discretion whether or not to approve the application. Pursuant to this section the Council can refuse the application 'because they consider that the area specified in the application is not an appropriate area to be designated as a neighbourhood area'. However, in these circumstances the Council must exercise their power of designation so as to secure that some or all of the area forms part of one or more areas designated as neighbourhood areas. In other words the Council are required to make a designation but are entitled to deviate from the boundaries set out in the application. Any decision to alter the boundary of a neighbourhood area could be challenged in the Courts and therefore the reasons for doing so must be clearly set out and justified as has been done in this report. No further guidance is given in either in the TCPA 1990 or the regulations as to when an area may be considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area, however, Legal Services consider that the reasons set out at section 1 of this report (which constitute the officer's reasons for recommending firstly the refusal of the area applied for by Network Wapping and secondly the designation of a neighbourhood area with a different boundary) are relevant considerations to which the Council is entitled to have regard.
- 5.8 The power to designate a neighbourhood area can be exercised by two or more planning authorities where the neighbourhood area proposed crosses the boundaries of more than one authority (Section 61I of the TCPA 1990). As such the area proposed by East Shoreditch must be designated by Hackney Council as well as Tower Hamlets Council for the area to be properly designated.
- 5.9 Consultation in respect of the applications for the neighbourhood planning areas and forums (as detailed in this report) has been carried out in accordance with Regulations 6 and 9 respectively of the Town and Country Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Council's decisions on both the areas and forums must also be publicised as soon as possible after a decision is taken (Regulations 7 and 10).
- 5.10 When considering whether to designate a neighbourhood forum or a neighbourhood area, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the

advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application and Cabinet must be mindful of this duty inter alia when determining all planning applications. In particular the Cabinet must pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 To ensure the One Tower Hamlets aspirations and wider equality issues are addressed, the Council requires applications to establish Neighbourhood Planning Areas and Forums to demonstrate how they will contribute to the Council's One Tower Hamlets objectives/Valuing Diversity Statement and envisage engaging with local people. The Town and Country Planning Act also requires that the membership of a Forum is open to individuals who live, work or represent the Neighbourhood Planning Area. Both applications have successfully demonstrated these elements. The Council would encourage the designated forums to target any protected groups or individuals it considers under represented. In respect of the recommendation in relation to the Network Wapping and the concerns about a lack of representativeness and an inability to reflect the diversity of community views, there is no evidence that these difficulties are related to persons or groups with protected characteristics.

6.3 Once designated, if Forums wish to progress to developing Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders, these will need to follow the 'Golden Thread' of the Local Plan Equalities Analysis.

7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

7.1 Successfully designated Neighbourhood Planning Areas and Forums represent the first stage of the neighbourhood planning process which may identify and deliver local green spaces and greener neighbourhoods through Neighbourhood Plans. This also delivers an opportunity for improving biodiversity and delivering measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The application determination process has been reported through the Development and Renewal Directorate Management Team and the Council's Corporate Management Team to identify and address any arising risks. Should there be a challenge by Network Wapping to the Council's designation decisions then there may be considerable costs associated with defending the claim. Neighbourhood Planning is also identified as an activity in the Council's Strategic Plan and as such is subject to the Council's risk management procedures.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Successfully designated Neighbourhood Planning Areas and Forums represent the first stage of the neighbourhood planning process which may identify and deliver specific improvements to the public realm resulting in safer local areas.
- 9.2 Neighbourhood Plans will also need to be in general conformity with the relevant strategic planning policies in the Council's Local Plan relating to 'Secured by Design' principles. Development informed by Neighbourhood Plans will be required to ensure crime prevention measures are considered to assist with reducing the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime, by creating a safer and more secure environment.

10. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

- 10.1 Successfully designated Neighbourhood Planning Areas and Forums represent the first stage of the neighbourhood planning process which may identify and deliver opportunities to develop land not identified in the Local Plan. This may release S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions aiding the delivery of new affordable housing, local enterprise and employment opportunities, public realm enhancements, and community infrastructure.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

NONE

Appendices for Cabinet

- Appendix 1: Neighbourhood Planning Area maps for approval
- Appendix 2: Consultation Summary Reports (August 2013 and December 2013)
- Appendix 3: Proposed amended Wapping Neighbourhood Planning Area
- Appendix 4: Role of the Council for managing and monitoring the legal compliance of Neighbourhood Planning Forums

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

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