

PROPOSED NORWOOD PLANNING ASSEMBLY

ORGANISING THE WORK; THE SUGGESTED TASK GROUPS

Graham Pycock 1 February 2015

The Norwood Planning Assembly (NPA) is the body proposed to draw up a “Norwood Plan” under the 2011 Localism Act. Such a plan, which would need to be approved by Norwood people in a referendum, would have statutory force in local planning matters. An application to Lambeth Council is being finalised for designation of the Norwood area and for the constitution of the Norwood Planning Assembly. The Assembly is sponsored by both the Norwood Forum and the Norwood Action Group which have already operated jointly on planning matters. A recent newspaper report on “localism” included a neat quote on the purpose of devising a local plan: “Successful communities are those that define themselves. They don’t wait for the council to come along, they are full of active people looking to help”.

This note is a draft of the arrangements for how Norwood people could devise suitable planning policies for eventual approval in a Norwood Plan. The work is complex and needs to be divided up into the topics which meet the interests and aspirations of people in Norwood. Task groups are therefore suggested which address issues of concern but are also workable in terms of the size and scope of topic. The planning proposals which emerge must correspond to the policy framework of the overall “Lambeth Local Plan” and it is this Lambeth plan which is the starting point for existing policy and evidence.

It is proposed that a task group should have a “convener” who would be a volunteer member of the public who has joined as a designated member of the NPA. Relevant experience in a professional or voluntary capacity would be valued. It is expected that the convener and a core team of volunteers would ensure continuity for the approximately one year required. Advice and support will be available from a Lambeth planning officer. Funding is to be applied for so as to pay for a “rapporteur” to record discussions and findings and capture and update emerging policies. There is a requirement that local stakeholders and the public are fully involved and consulted as the Norwood Plan is being developed. The proposed NPA will have an Executive which will coordinate the work of task groups and take overall responsibility for the process of devising the plan.

Norwood people have been consulted many times over the last several years and clear themes have emerged over local concerns. Views vary as to the practical outcomes of repeated consultation and whether so much local good will has been well applied or not. The agenda for past consultations has always set by professional experts. For the purposes of the Norwood Plan, local people can set their own agenda. There is certainly a substantial “shopping list” of local concerns and issues. These must be encompassed by the task groups. Some of these concerns are site specific, some are related to planning policy and some to do with the quality of the Norwood built environment.

Planning policies for the whole borough of Lambeth are set out in the Lambeth Local Plan for 15 years and an updated version will soon be approved. However, a revision of this borough plan will commence almost immediately and the Norwood Planning Assembly will have the opportunity to influence the borough policies if it chose to do so. In any case the Norwood Plan will need to follow the borough policies while providing local interpretation or elaboration. The Lambeth Local Plan is the context for local planning. The task groups should adopt a framework which relates easily to the policies in the Lambeth Local Plan. The proposed set of task groups are devised so that each of the Lambeth local plan policies is encompassed by one or more of the task groups. The Lambeth plan policy headings are:

D; Delivering the Vision and Objectives

H; Housing

ED; Economic Development, Retail and Town Centre Uses

S; Social Infrastructure

T; Transport and Communications

EN; Environment and Green Infrastructure

Q; Quality of the Built Environment

Another section of the Lambeth Local Plan sets out policies for specific sites and places. This section is called PN; Places and Neighbourhoods. The proposed area for the Norwood Planning Assembly comprises Knights Hill, Gipsy Hill and Thurlow Park wards. Two parts of the places and neighbourhood section fall within Norwood's area. The most substantial part is PN7 West Norwood, but there is also PN11 Upper Norwood. Each task group will need to review and refer to these two "PN" parts of the Lambeth plan. During the "examination" phase of earlier consultations on the Lambeth Local Plan, the Norwood Action Group made a number of written comments about PN7 and PN11, which reflect local concerns. The task groups will be supplied with the relevant policy sections from the Lambeth Local Plan, together with PN7 and PN11 concerning specific issues for West Norwood and Upper Norwood. There will also be material from local submissions.

THE SUGGESTED NPA TASK GROUPS

- 1) The **NPA Executive** will coordinate the process as a whole, devise a "project bank", but also encompass D; Delivering the Vision and Values (of the Lambeth Local Plan)
 - 2) An **Economic and Business Task Group** will encompass ED; Economic Development, Retail and Town Centre
 - 3) An **Infrastructure Task Group** will encompass S; Social Infrastructure, together with EN; Environment and Green Infrastructure
 - 4) A **Housing Task Group** will encompass H; Housing
 - 5) A **Transport Task Group** will encompass T; transport and Communications
- There is a "Q; Quality of the Built Environment" section but this is seen as thematic and critical to each task group.