

Neighbourhood Planning Area Application Form



This form should be completed electronically.

Important Information:

This application form should be completed using the information provided in the Tower Hamlets [Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note Stage 1](#).

In order to increase the speed and ease of decision making, and to make the process more manageable for prospective Forums, the Council strongly suggests that this application should be completed and submitted before a Neighbourhood Forum application. Once the Neighbourhood Area has been formally designated, a Neighbourhood Forum Application can be submitted.

The Council wants to ensure that your applications are approved in a smooth and timely manner. In order to support this process, we encourage interested groups to meet and begin discussions with the Plan Making Team, well in advance of submitting an application.

This meeting will provide advice and guidance on key considerations, which will help to ensure that the Area and Forum, as applied for can be designated without delays.

Email neighbourhoodplanning@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call 020 7364 5009 to set up the meeting.

Contact information

Group name

. 'The Roman Road Neighbourhood Forum'

Contact details of the Group (complete as relevant)

Email address	hello@romanroadneighbourhoodplan.org
Website address	https://www.romanroadneighbourhoodplan.org
Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/groups/romanroadneighbourhoodforum
Twitter account	https://twitter.com/rordnplan
Other	Click here to enter text.

Public information

Neighbourhood Planning Area application information

1a. Do you consider your group to be capable of being designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum? (in accordance with the requirements for Forums set out in the LBTH Guidance Note Stage 1)

Yes No

1b. Please provide a statement that your group is capable of being designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum? (in accordance with the requirements for Forums set out in the LBTH Guidance Note Stage 1)

The Localism Act 2011, Section 61G (1) (a) on the meaning of “neighbourhood area” states that a relevant body has to apply to the local authority for an area specified in the application to be designated as a neighbourhood area. **‘The Roman Road Neighbourhood Forum’** is a prospective forum, and is a relevant body under this Act capable of designation. An application for forum designation will be submitted to Tower Hamlets Council, in accordance with recent local authority guidance, as it meets the following conditions of the 2011 Act:

- (a) The proposed neighbourhood forum has an agreed name, **‘The Roman Road Neighbourhood Forum’**.
- (b) The forum has a written constitution;
- (c) The name of the neighbourhood area to which the application relates has an agreed name, **‘The Roman Road Neighbourhood Plan Area’**, and a map is provided which identifies the area;
- (d) The contact details of two members of the proposed neighbourhood forum are made public through this application, in accordance with regulations 9 and 10; and
- (e) A statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions contained in section 61F (5) of the 1990 Act will be included in the forum application.

We also confirm here that the following four conditions of **The Town and Country Planning Act (1990)** are met by the forum:

1. It is established to promote or improve the local, economic and environmental well-being of its Neighbourhood Planning Area.
2. It has a membership open to everyone who lives in, works in or represents the area as an elected member.
3. Its membership includes a minimum of 21 people, each of whom lives in, works in or represents the area as an elected member.
4. It has a written constitution.

(f) The Forum has been set up and funded by the Roman Road Trust C.I.C. Roman Road Trust (RRT) is an economic and community development organisation that has been running since 2013 and incorporated as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company since November 2014.

RRT was set up following a consultation of the community where 300 local residents and businesses attended a workshop to contribute to a vision for the local area.

Over the last three or four years the RRT has delivered many initiatives for the benefit of the community including regular community events (the most recent event attracted 12,000 people); dozens of petitions objecting to developments that threaten the health of the high street; digital

marketing platforms that promote the high street and local businesses; and community cohesion initiatives including the community market Roman Road Yard Market, business consultations and a digital camp to help train local businesses in digital skills.

RRT now has a mailing list of over 1000, including 200 local businesses. RRT publishes the local 'high street' website www.romanroadlondon.com which attracts 4,000 to 6,000 unique users per month. RRT also manages five social media platforms that collectively have 10,000 followers.

RRT consists of a Board of seven directors, two of which are members of the Forum's steering committee. One of these Directors is Torange Khonsari, architecture tutor at Cass School of Architecture. Khonsari undergraduate students are studying Roman Road over the next year and will be working closely with local community groups to get their involvement in the Forum. Another Director on the Forum's steering committee is Sarah Allan. Allan is a member of Hackney Council's design review panel, a Design Council Cobe Built Environment Expert and a committee member for the National Community Land Trust Network funding panel. In this way, the RRT will be able to continue to steer and support the Forum.

Tabitha Stapely is also on the Forum's steering committee. Stapely founded the RRT, was Chair and is now currently CEO of the RRT. Stapely now works in an executive capacity working on a programme of economic and community cohesion project.

The Forum will also be able to draw on the RRT's existing large membership. The close connection between the two groups means the Forum can use the digital platforms and attend the well-publicised local community events to reach out to local residents and get them involved in the Forum.

2. Has a clear map of the proposed Neighbourhood Planning Area been attached? Ideally at a 1:1250 scale.

Yes No

3a. Does the proposed Area overlap with any other Neighbourhood Planning Areas? Please note Neighbourhood Areas cannot overlap. You may include land from an already designated Area within your application, but the council will then have to decide which of the two Areas to include it within when determining your application

Yes No

3b. If yes, which Areas?

Click here to enter text.

4a. Do you consider the proposed area to be suitable for designation as a Neighbourhood Business Planning Area?

Legislation states that to be designated as a Neighbourhood Business Planning Area, an area must be "wholly or predominately business in nature". Please note the decision to designate a Neighbourhood Business Planning Area, rests entirely with the Council.

Yes No

4b. If yes, please provide evidence below regarding the business nature of the proposed Area

[Click here to enter text.](#)

5a. Why is the boundary of the Neighbourhood Planning Area considered to be appropriate?

How does the boundary take into account:

- Sections 61G, 61H, 61I and 61O of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Paragraphs 033 and 035 of the National Planning Policy Guidance
- Elements of character, including physical, cultural and perceptual aspects for the Area.
- The diversity of its population
- The Council's existing evidence base, Local Plan policies and site allocations
- Whether it would negatively impact on the delivery of strategic policies

The Roman Road Neighbourhood Plan group consider the neighbourhood area boundary appropriate, as it not only includes businesses along a section of the Roman Road, (east of Grove Road up to the A12), but a significant area within the boundary includes residential communities for which the Roman Road is their closest high street: communities lying to the south of Roman Road, with Bow Road as the southern boundary; and communities to the north with Victoria Park as the northern boundary.

For the Roman Road to continue to function as a local high street in years to come, it is important that the needs and views of the surrounding residents inform the plan, and not just taking into account the needs and views of businesses on the Roman Road itself.

A wider neighbourhood area will encourage residential communities to participate in seeing the benefits arising from the neighbourhood plan occur beyond the Roman Road, to the surrounding residential streets and estates.

– Elements of character for the Area and the diversity of its population - National and Regional Guidance

The layout of the streets and architecture of the neighbourhood area reflects the many changes that have occurred over the last 150 years and contribute significantly to its character: streets of Victorian terraces at the western end of the boundary, to the south of Victoria Park and immediately north and south the railway viaduct, including around Tredegar Square. Post-war housing estates dating from the 1950's to more recent developments form the majority of the housing stock in the area - a mix of towers, low rise apartment blocks of three to six storeys and terraced houses. Some of the industrial heritage is still present in buildings such as the, now converted, Bryant & May match factory, in the south east corner of the neighbourhood area boundary and the Chisenhale studios to the north west corner of the neighbourhood area boundary.

The residential community within the neighbourhood area boundary is a diverse mix of ages, ethnicities, income levels and religions that reflect the borough as a whole (Core Strategy p20).

Paragraph 033 of the Planning Practice Guidance has been considered. This refers to 'whether infrastructure or physical features define a natural boundary, for example a major road or railway line or waterway.' Major roads or canals form the boundaries of all sides of the proposed area, with the

Roman Road running like a spinal column through the area. The proposed area is a suitable catchment area for walking to local shops and businesses, primary schools, GP surgeries and Mile End and other local parks. Paragraph 033 also states that 'Electoral ward boundaries can be a useful starting point for discussions on the appropriate size of a neighbourhood area...' Our proposed area boundary coincides closely with the external boundaries of Bow East and Bow West wards.

– The Council's existing evidence base, Local Plan strategic objectives and policies, site allocations and 'places' guidelines (as seen in the Core Strategy)

The Tower Hamlets Local Plan (section 3, p86) shows that there are no site allocations in the proposed neighbourhood area.

Roman Road is designated as a 'district centre' in the Core Strategy (maps on p27 and p36).

Victoria Park and the Regent's Canal form the northern boundary to the neighbourhood area. These natural assets are significant in the borough as a whole (Core Strategy 2010-2025, Ch1 para 1.33), with the importance of connecting to open, green and water spaces highlighted as a particular challenge.

Page 114 of the Core Strategy describes the vision for Bow, the opportunities for growth and how Tower Hamlets Council intends to achieve it. The chapter highlights the principles for change which align with preliminary discussions that the proposed Forum have had, including:

- Improvements to connectivity should be sought, with new development and estate-regeneration to reinstate a traditional, joined-up street pattern.
- Retail, small and medium enterprises, creative industries, leisure and civic uses should be focused in Roman Road East town centre.

Relevant policies in the local plan include: p24-DM2 - local shops, p36-DM8 - community infrastructure and p40-DM10 - delivering open space.

There are a number of statutory listed (largely Grade II), and locally listed buildings within the neighbourhood area boundary. There are also several conservation areas including: Roman Road Market, Driffield Road, Medway, Tredegar Square, Fairfield Road, Regents Canal and Victoria Park.

- Whether the Area boundary would negatively impact on the delivery of strategic policies (in which case the Council may decide to amend the boundary)

Our review of the Council's Core Strategy and Local Plan haven't identified any potential negative impacts on the delivery of the strategic policies. There are a number of synergies between the aspirations of the proposed Roman Road Neighbourhood Forum and the Council's policy documents. We view the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for the Roman Road area as an opportunity for some of the Council's delivery aims to be achieved through the neighbourhood plan.

5b. Were alternative boundaries considered?

Yes

No

5c. If yes, please describe these boundaries and why they were discounted

1. The inclusion of Fish Island.

The importance of improved connectivity between Bow and Fish Island, separated by the A12, led us to consider the inclusion of the island. We decided against this for the following reasons:

- Fish Island falls under a different planning authority for plan-making and development control - the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC).
- An Area Action Plan (AAP) already exists for the island: the Fish Island Area Action Plan (2012).
- The proposed plan area is already quite large, and broadly coincides with the ward boundaries for Bow East and Bow West.

2. The railway line to the south of Antil Road and Tredegar Road as the southern boundary of the area.

This southern boundary was discounted because:

- One of the aims of a plan would be to improve the connectivity into Bow from neighbouring areas, and within Bow itself.
- The railway line is seen as one of the barriers to north-south movement within Bow. Considering how to mitigate its negative impact and improve connections with the Roman Road from the area to the south would be an appropriate challenge in developing a neighbourhood plan.
- Through contact with members of Mile End Old Town Residents Association (MEOTRA), we came to a fuller appreciation of the distinctive character and context of the area previously known as Mile End Old Town. Part of this is now covered by the Tredegar Square Conservation Area. We believe that the interests of residents in promoting conservation and improvement in the MEOTRA area can be supported within the wider context of a neighbourhood plan, allowing a win-win outcome.

3. Exclusion of the section of Mile End Park between Grove Road and the canal, from Mile End Road in the south to Old Ford Road in the north.

The plan making team asked us to look at excluding the park as our proposed neighbourhood area only included this northernmost rectangle of the park, omitting the larger area of the park south of Mile End Road. This idea was discounted because:

- Consultation with people attending an annual community fair in the park, organised by Friends of Mile End Park, showed support for inclusion of the park. Comments from local residents included the following:

‘It makes sense for the park to be included in the area. The other side of the canal have other green spaces that are more readily available.’ (E3 5EE)

‘It’s important to keep the park as an open space. The canal is a natural boundary for the

area.’ (E3 5RF)

‘I think it’s reasonable to include the park. Queen Mary College however is concerned about preventing unauthorised access from the park.’ (E3 5AJ)

- **Core strategy 2010 -2025 (2010) Chapter 1 Para.1.33** ‘Given the inner-London nature of the borough, improving access to open, green and water spaces continues to be a significant challenge.’ The core strategy (SP 13 Planning Obligations) also states that one priority is ‘publicly accessible open spaces.’ The chapter on ‘delivering placemaking’ says one way this will be achieved is by improving ‘connections between Mile End Road and Victoria Park and to promote walking and cycling through Bow.’

4. Exclusion of the section of Cadogan Terrace to the north of the canal up to the boundary with Hackney.

Cadogan Terrace is a spur off the north-eastern corner of the rectangle originally proposed as the plan area. The Council’s plan making team asked us to consider including the part of Cadogan Terrace that is within Tower Hamlets. We subsequently changed our minds and included Cadogan Terrace up to the border with Hackney because:

- We hadn’t given consideration to the residents and businesses along this road until prompted by the plan making team.
- We consulted local residents and businesses, and responses were generally favourable to inclusion. There was some wariness, but this seemed mainly due to reservations about how effective they thought a neighbourhood plan would be in delivering change, rather than objecting to the idea of inclusion.
- Omitting Cadogan Terrace could potentially leave this area isolated from the neighbourhood it is most closely linked with in Tower Hamlets.

6a. Have you undertaken consultation on these boundaries?

Yes No

6b. If yes, please briefly outline the nature of the consultation and the feedback received

6.b Briefly outline the nature of the consultation and the feedback received

There has been varied and extensive consultation methods used in order to reach as wide a community as possible. The aims was to inform local people about the neighbourhood planning process, seek their views on the proposed plan area and encourage comments on how the area could be improved. Those contacted were also encouraged to consider membership of the neighbourhood forum.

Overall, our consultation showed support for the proposed area as submitted, and the area does not seem contentious.

The consultation methods used were:

- 1- Initial inaugural public meeting
- 2- Formal consultation events with key officers
- 3- 1:1 meetings with key community members
- 4- Surveys
- 5- Creative community engagement events
- 6-Online presence



1- Initial inaugural public meeting

An inaugural public meeting was held in February 2016 at St Paul's Church, attended by over 50 local people and facilitated by Andrew Belfield from public works and The Cass architecture students. This event introduced what a neighbourhood plan and forum is and what potential function it has for local communities. In smaller groups local residents brainstormed about what the neighbourhood meant to them and where the boundary should be placed. It encouraged wide participation of the local residents in a future NF.

The meeting led to formation of a steering committee of approximately 10 people. The group met approximately every three weeks since then overseeing a rigorous consultation process and mapping out wider program for developing the future neighbourhood plan.

FEEDBACK: There were some reservations about how effective a neighbourhood plan will be in delivering change, but the strength of concern for the area among those who responded was very heartening.



2- Formal consultation events with key community stakeholders

In June 2016 at Caxton hall the consultation focused on key community organisations representing diverse groups and age ranges, to make sure the voices of those communities are heard in the boundary allocation and future content of neighbourhood plan.

Other public meeting attended included a Premises Forum consultation convened by Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service at which senior council officers presented proposals for a policy on community premises.

FEEDBACK: At Caxton Hall: Initial wariness was expressed from some members of Mile End Old Town Residents Association (MEOTRA) due to the perception that a neighbourhood forum might negatively impact their group. However, there has since been a growing appreciation that a forum might be a helpful vehicle for enabling local groups to achieve their aims through being part of a wider body which is able to influence the planning process.

3- 1:1 meetings with key officers and councillors

A variety of small meetings with representatives of different bodies have been held. In May 2016 Tom Martin, Tabitha Stapely and Mike Mitchell from the steering committee had a meeting with Ellie Kuper Thomas and Hong Chen of the Plan Making Team, who gave helpful guidance about the formal process and the role of planning officers. We have continued to liaise with Ellie Kuper Thomas over progress since then.

In September 2016 members of the steering group met with Rachel Blake, councillor for Bow East, and cabinet member for strategic planning. This helped us understand better the challenges posed by empty shops in the Roman Road, and opportunities for improving public realm spaces either side of

the road. A steering group member attended the Council's recent conference on its new housing strategy as a result of this meeting.

FEEDBACK: Generally very supportive and encouraging feedback was offered in all these sessions.

4- Surveys

We were keen to obtain the views of young people as nearly a fifth of the population of Bow East and Bow west (18% according to 2014 ward profiles) are under 16. Morpeth School were extremely helpful in enabling us to carry out a survey. 54 students aged 12-15 completed the survey, which asked them for their views on the neighbourhoods where they lived. 63% of participants were Asian.

FEEDBACK: A key finding concerned the importance of leisure facilities to young people:

'The fact that 65% of students mentioned leisure facilities of some kind demonstrates a clear desire for more or better youth leisure provision. This is supported by the answer to the question about changing 'one thing' in their neighbourhoods. Better leisure facilities was mentioned by 13% of students, with a similar per cent mentioning more parks or open areas. The wish for cleaner and safer neighbourhoods were the next most common subjects reported.'

5- Creative Community engagement events

In collaboration with The Cass school of architecture the steering committee devised a series of more engaging community events to attract audiences who would otherwise not attend formal meetings. These included market stalls, coffee and biscuit sessions at InterAct hub, the High street Re-imagined walk and the Community Fair:

a) Market stalls

During May and June members of the steering committee held a market stall as part of the Saturday Roman Road Yard Market on the corner of Roman Road and St Stephen's Road. This was particularly helpful in reaching people who may not be part of local groups or use the internet.

The stall exhibited a map of the designated boundary and talked to local residents about the location of the boundary and what they wanted from their neighbourhood and high street.

FEEDBACK: Feedback centered on improving the high street and areas of public realm. Many people commented on the connectivity of the road to the neighbourhood and further afield. There was a strong appetite for improving the high street to make it a more desirable place to shop and socialize at the weekends and in the evenings.

b) coffee and biscuit sessions at InterAct hub

Three coffee and biscuit sessions were held at InterAct hub inviting local residents from Circle housing to discuss their neighbourhood. These discussions held between July - October 2015 led to the development of an urban framework document submitted to LBTH which included work by Cass students which was compiled and developed by Public Works. This document will be visually present and accessible to the community as a base for development of a future neighbourhood plan. Coffee and biscuit or discussion around food will continue as a consultation method to develop the

neighbourhood plan.

FEEDBACK: There were requests for more activities for children and mothers. The drop-ins with shop keepers mainly addressed the lack of footfall. It was overwhelming how important circle housing is in the area, as it has the most population of daytime shoppers and visitors to the high street. Their voices are very important.

c) The High street Re-imagined walk

The High Street Re-imagined was an exciting event in March 2016 where Cass architecture students took local residents and Neighbourhood forum members on a walk in the area, talking about unforeseen public spaces and community involved projects that can develop in the area. The aim of these spaces would be to increase civic pride of the neighbourhood. Bringing diversity between economic, cultural, and social projects. This all led to debates between the group about what projects they wish to have in the neighbourhood.

FEEDBACK: People were very positive about the different way of thinking about community spaces and the opportunity to talk about them. Asked for more events like it.

d) Community Fair

The '**Community Fair**' in July organised by 'Friends of Mile End Park' provided another opportunity for the NF to consult with local people over the area, especially whether or not to include a part of the park in the designation area.

FEEDBACK: Everyone spoken to was in favour of the park being included in the plan area, indicating a strong liking of this green space and it being part of their neighbourhood. Typical of the response was: 'Absolutely - it's the main green area nearby.'

6- Online Presence

As well as all the above we also have a strong online presence. There is a dedicated website, which can be found at: www.romanroadneighbourhoodplan.org. We also have a Facebook group for the Forum and a Twitter account. See above for site addresses.

The website is linked to 'Commonplace', an online public consultation platform, enabling contact with a wider group of people. This has led people to comment both on the area and any local matter of concern to them. The boundary has not been much commented on, supporting our view that it's not a contentious issue. However, three people left comments requesting Cadogan Terrace be included in the plan area, as it was excluded in the map on our website. These comments, along with similar ones received during a door-knocking exercise, have led us to include Cadogan Terrace in the updated proposed plan area.

Emails and letters

We have sought the views of as wide a range of local individuals and groups as possible. Tower

Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service provided a list of member groups in E3 which supplemented the list of local groups held by the Roman Road Trust. All the groups for which we could find contact details were contacted, and invited to comment on the proposed area. A list of organisations contacted is given at the end of this document.

We communicate all our ideas via emails and letters to our authorised mailing list. Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service provided a list of member groups in E3 which supplemented the list of local groups held by the Roman Road Trust. All the groups for which we could find contact details were contacted, and invited to comment on the proposed area.

Many individual visits to local businesses and community groups have been made, and the time spent engaging with people this way has proved fruitful. One response in particular, from Bow Arts, is worth quoting in detail:

"With regard to your neighbourhood consultation, Bow Arts and the Nunnery Gallery would love to be included in the Roman Road neighbourhood catchment. We are on the cusp of many different neighbourhoods – a strange position and, as such, are not part of any one local community group – but do feel affiliated to the activity and culture of Roman Road, the market and its many small businesses. In terms of our target local catchment for gallery and studio visitors, Roman Road is our first point of call, which I think reaffirms this. In light of the coming heritage trail that we'd also love to be a part of, we would like to be included – looking to improve way-finding throughout Bow and the Roman Road area." *Bow Arts*

List of organisations contacted

Tower Hamlets Council

The Plan Making team; Ward councillors for Bow West and Bow East;

Housing

Circle Housing Old Ford

Mile End Old Town Residents' Association (MEOTRA)

Fairfield Conservation Area Residents' Association (FCARA)

NHS

St Stephen's Health Centre

Community groups

Over 30 local groups covering a wide range of concerns were contacted and asked for their views on the proposed area. The following is a list of local groups who agreed to being in the Forum.

- Bow Muslim Community Centre
- Circle Housing

- Chisenhale Gallery
- East End Trades Guild
- Growing Concerns
- British Waterways
- Bow Haven
- AgeUK
- Construction Training Centre

Faith groups

Bow Baptist Church, Old Ford Methodist Church, Our Lady & St. Catherine of Siena (Roman Catholic), St Barnabas, Bethnal Green (Church of England), St Mary, Bow (Church of England), St Paul's Church, Old Ford (Church of England), Victoria Park Baptist Church; the Hindu Pragati Sangha Temple; Bow Muslim Community Centre; the Gurdwara Sikh Sangat.

7a. Does the proposed Area also include an area in boroughs adjacent to Tower Hamlets?

Yes No

If Yes, which ones:

- LB Hackney
- LB Newham
- London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC)
- City of London Corporation

7b. If yes, have these Planning Authorities been informed?

Yes No

7c. If yes, please list the date, name of contact and the outcome of any contact below:

Click here to enter text.

Meeting Log: Please provide dates of your meetings with the Plan Making Team	18 th May 2016 and 21 st October 2016
Applicant name	Tabitha Stapely
Date	27 October 2016

Please note: Forums will be required to inform the Council of any change to the original content and intentions detailed in its application form.