

Cabinet	 TOWER HAMLETS
24 November 2021	
Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place	Classification: Unrestricted
Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan – Validation of Submission	

Lead Member	Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning
Originating Officer(s)	Marc Acton Fillion, Plan-Making Officer
Wards affected	Bow East; Bow West
Key Decision?	Yes
Forward Plan Notice Published	28 September 2021
Reason for Key Decision	Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	1. People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities; 2. A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in

Executive Summary

The Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan was formally submitted for consideration by the Council on 15 October 2021. The Council is now required to assess the submission against the statutory requirements for neighbourhood plan submissions, and decide whether the plan should be put forward for further consultation and examination. The Council is not required at this stage to make an assessment of the suitability of the plan for adoption by the Council.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan to be submitted for examination, on the basis that it is compliant with the necessary regulations under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) regulations 2012.
2. Authorise the Divisional Director of Planning and Building Control, in

consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, to provide comments on behalf of the Council on the submission version of the neighbourhood plan during the Regulation 16 publicity period.

3. Agree that the Council should proceed to appoint an examiner of the neighbourhood plan with the consent of the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum.
4. Note the Equalities Impact Assessment considerations as set out in Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of the report.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Tower Hamlets Council has received a submission of a draft Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ('the 2012 Regulations').
- 1.2 The Council is required to consider whether the submission of the neighbourhood plan meets the legal requirements for such plans under Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011. If the submission meets those requirements, the neighbourhood plan should be taken forward to formal consultation and examination.
- 1.3 Officers have assessed the submission against the relevant legislation and regulations and are satisfied that the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan as submitted meets the requirements to proceed to consultation and examination. This is the reason for recommendation 1 above.
- 1.4 Under Regulation 16 of the 2012 Regulations, the Council must publicise and consult on the submission documents 'as soon as possible' after receiving them (assuming they meet the requirements of the legislation).
- 1.5 The Council organises the consultation under Regulation 16, but is also able to respond to that consultation as an interested party. An adopted neighbourhood plan will form part of the Council's development plan and will have full weight in decision making on planning matters in the neighbourhood plan area. This is the reason for recommendation 2 above.
- 1.6 Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011 requires an independent examiner of the neighbourhood plan to be appointed, who will examine the plan following the Regulation 16 consultation. This person should be appointed with the consent of the neighbourhood forum. This is the reason for recommendation 3 above.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Council may decline to consider a neighbourhood plan submission if it is considered a repeat submission; or can decline to take forward a neighbourhood plan if it is considered not to meet the legislative requirements. If the neighbourhood plan submission meets the legislative requirements and

does not meet the definition of a repeat proposal, it must be taken forward.

- 2.2 Officers consider that the submission meets the legislative requirements, and it is the first submission of a Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan and cannot be considered a repeat proposal, and therefore must be taken forward to consultation and examination. Consequently, there is no alternative option provided.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 This report provides an overview of the assessment of the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan submission.

- 3.2 The content of this report is as follows:

- Section 4: provides an introduction to Neighbourhood Planning
- Section 5: outlines the relevant legislative framework and guidance
- Section 6: provides an assessment of the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan submission

4. INTRODUCTION TO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: A COMMUNITY-LED PROCESS

- 4.1. The Localism Act 2011 amended the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990 to make provision for neighbourhood planning, which gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.
- 4.2. The legislative provisions concerning neighbourhood planning within the TCPA 1990 are supplemented by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015) and the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012.
- 4.3. Neighbourhood planning provides communities with the ability to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and/or Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO), in areas designated by the LPA on application as a neighbourhood area. Neighbourhood planning powers may only be exercised by bodies authorised by the legislation. In a neighbourhood area where there is a parish council, only a parish council may make proposals for a NDP or NDO. In neighbourhood areas without a parish council, only a body designated by the LPA as a neighbourhood forum may bring forward proposals for that neighbourhood area.

- 4.4. NDPs set out policies in relation to the development and use of land in all or part of a defined neighbourhood area and may include site allocations, or development principles, for allocated sites. They may also include character appraisals and seek to establish community facilities and/or identify areas for public realm improvements. NDOs allow for planning permission to be granted in the circumstances specified and exempt certain types of development, or development in certain areas, or on particular sites, from the usual requirement to apply to the LPA for a grant of planning permission.
- 4.5. Both NDPs and NDOs need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Council's Development Plan: the Tower Hamlets Local Plan (2020) and the London Plan (2016).
- 4.6. An NDP that has been 'made' in accordance with the relevant legislative provisions forms part of the Council's statutory Development Plan (comprising the Local Plan and London Plan) and, as such, will be accorded full weight when determining planning applications in the neighbourhood area. NDPs will form a new spatial layer to the Council's planning policy and guidance.
- 4.7. NDP policies are developed by a neighbourhood forum through consultation with stakeholders in their relevant neighbourhood area and through engagement with Council officers. Proposed NDP policies must be supported by an up-to-date evidence base to ensure that they are reasonable, sound and justified. Before the NDP is 'made' it must be subject to pre-submission publicity and consultation, submitted to the LPA for a legal compliance check, publicised for consultation, submitted for independent examination, found by the independent examiner to meet the basic conditions specified in the legislation, and passed at a referendum. Following the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2016, an NDP must be given some weight in determining planning applications once it has passed examination – even before it has passed at a referendum.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 4.8. The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, as amended by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2013 ('the CIL Regulations') were supplemented by the Community Infrastructure Levy Guidance Note, published by DCLG on 26 April 2013. The 2013 guidance was replaced by the Government's PPG on 6 March 2014.
- 4.9. The CIL Regulations, as explained by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), make provision for how CIL receipts may be used in relation to neighbourhood planning in those areas which have Parish Councils and those which do not. Tower Hamlets currently does not have any Parish Councils and, as such, the Council retains the revenue generated by CIL.
- 4.10. The Community Infrastructure Levy PPG states (at paragraph 145) that in areas where there is a 'made' NDP or NDO in place, 25% of CIL collected in the neighbourhood area should be spent in that area. Where there is a parish council in place, the money should be passed to the parish council for them to

spend directly. Paragraph 146 states that “if there is no parish or town council, the charging authority will retain the levy receipts but should engage with the communities where development has taken place and agree with them how best to spend the neighbourhood funding”.

- 4.11. Therefore, where an NDP or NDO has been adopted, the Council is required to consult with the local community as to how this 25% proportion of CIL receipts will be spent. Irrespective of this regulation, the Cabinet in December 2016, agreed to undertake this for all areas of the borough whether or not an NDP or NDO has been adopted.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLANS: RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1. This section outlines the relevant legislative framework and guidance as they relate to the submission and consideration of NDPs.

Submitting the Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 5.2. In accordance with Regulation 15 of the 2012 Regulations where a relevant body submits a NDP to the LPA it must include:
- (a) the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan;
 - (b) a map or statement which identifies the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan;
 - (c) a Consultation Statement that contains details of who was consulted on the draft Neighbourhood Plan, how they were consulted, the main issues and concerns raised, and how these have been addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan;
 - (d) a Basic Conditions Statement that sets out how a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order meets the ‘basic conditions’. These being:
 - i. it has regard to national policies and advice;
 - ii. it has special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses (only applicable to Neighbourhood Development Orders that grant planning permission for development);
 - iii. it has special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area (only applicable to Neighbourhood Development Orders that grant planning permission for development);
 - iv. it contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - v. it is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority; and
 - vi. and that the making of the order does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations. And,
 - (e) where appropriate, the information to enable appropriate environmental assessments if required.

- 5.3. An LPA may decline to consider a plan proposal if they consider it to be a repeat proposal (TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B Paragraph 5). If an LPA declines to consider a plan on this basis it must inform the forum of this decision.

Considering the submission

- 5.4. In accordance with the TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B Paragraph 6 and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004 Schedule 38B, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4, the LPA must consider the following:
- (a) whether the neighbourhood forum is authorised to act;
 - (b) whether the proposal and accompanying documents:
 - i. comply with the rules for submission to the LPA (see 5.2 above); and
 - ii. meet the 'definition of an NDP': "A plan which sets out policies (however expressed) in relation to the development and use of land in the whole or any part of a particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan"; and
 - iii. meet the 'scope of NDP provisions':
 - 1. The NDP must specify the period for which it is to have effect; and
 - 2. It cannot include provision about development that is 'excluded development' (as defined by paragraph 61K of schedule 9 of the TCPA 1990) such as minerals and waste matters or Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects; and
 - 3. It cannot relate to more than one neighbourhood area and there are no other NDPs in place that cover any part of the neighbourhood area.
 - (c) whether the neighbourhood forum has undertaken the correct procedures in relation to consultation and publicity (outlined in Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations). These state that before submission to the LPA the qualifying body should:
 - i. publicise (but this does not have to be on a website) in a way that is likely to bring to the attention of people who live work or carry on business in the area details of :
 - 1. the proposals,
 - 2. when and where they can be inspected,
 - 3. how to make representations, and
 - 4. the deadline for making representations – not less than 6 weeks from when they were first publicised
 - ii. consult any consultation body listed in The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Schedule 1 whose interests they consider may be affected by the proposals for a NDP; and
 - iii. send a copy of the NDP to the LPA.

- 5.5. In accordance with paragraph 6 of schedule 4B of the TCPA 1990, the LPA can refuse to take forward a plan proposal if any of the criteria above do not apply.
- 5.6. The LPA must notify the forum whether or not they are satisfied that the proposal complies with the criteria for a NDP. Where it is not satisfied the LPA can refuse and must notify them of the reasons. It must also publicise its decision in a 'decision notice' (Regulation 19 of the 2012 Regulations).
- 5.7. The legislation and regulations are clear that when a draft NDP is submitted to a LPA the authority is only considering the draft plan against the statutory requirements set out in paragraph 6 of Schedule 4B of the TCPA 1990. In particular, the LPA has to be satisfied that a basic condition statement has been submitted but it is not required to consider whether the draft plan meets the basic conditions. It is only after the independent examination has taken place and after the examiner's report has been received that the LPA comes to its formal view on whether the draft NDP meets the basic conditions (Neighbourhood Planning PPG Paragraph 053).

6. NEIGHBOURHOD DEVELOPMENT PLANS: ROMAN ROAD BOW NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SUBMISSION

- 6.1. This section provides detailed of the assessment of the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan submission, in relation to the criteria outlined above.

Submission of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 6.2. The Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum submitted the required documents to the Council on 15 October 2021.
- 6.3. The required documents are attached as appendices to this report. Further evidence base documents were submitted and will be provided to the examiner of the plan – they are not statutory requirements for the submission, so have not been attached as appendices to this report. The full list of attached documents is as follows:

- Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 1, split into three parts due to size limits on the reporting system)
- Consultation Statement and Summary of Regulation 14 Consultation Responses (Appendices 2-3)
- Basic Conditions Statement (Appendix 4)
- Equalities Impact Assessment Screening (Appendix 5)
- SEA/HRA Screening Assessment Letter (Appendix 6)

Assessment of the Submission

- 6.4. This section summarises the assessment of the submission against the requirements set out in the legislation and regulations, as described above.

In accordance with TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B Paragraph 6 and PCPA 2004 Schedule 38B, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4, is the neighbourhood forum authorised to act?

- 6.5. Yes. The Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum were designated by Tower Hamlets Council in August 2017. The designation process followed the required statutory procedures and as such the neighbourhood forum is authorised to act.

In accordance with TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B Paragraph 6 and PCPA 2004 Schedule 38B, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4, did the proposal and accompanying documents comply with the rules for submission to the LPA (see 5.2 above)?

- 6.6. Yes. The documents received on 15 October 2021 included all the necessary documents to comply with the submission requirements:

- The submission version of the neighbourhood plan;
- a map of the area the plan relates to (within the plan itself);
- a consultation statement which records who was consulted, how they were consulted, a summary of responses received, and an explanation of how those responses were taken into account in the preparation of the submission version of the plan;
- a basic conditions statement which covers the issues required, and which makes clear that the Council's Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report found that an SEA or HRA are not required.

In accordance with TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B Paragraph 6 and PCPA 2004 Schedule 38B, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4, did the submitted draft NDP meet the 'definition of an NDP'?

- 6.7. Yes. An NDP is defined as "a plan which sets out policies (however expressed) in relation to the development and use of land in the whole or any part of a particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan" (PCPA 2004 (as amended)). The policies within the neighbourhood plan relate to heritage protection, open space, and the delivery of employment space in new developments, and officers believe that they are policies for the development and use of land.

In accordance with TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B Paragraph 6 and PCPA 2004 Schedule 38B, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4, did the submitted documents meet the 'scope of NDP provisions'?

- 6.8. Yes. The plan meets the scope of NDP provisions. The plan period of 2021–2031 is specified in the submitted Neighbourhood Plan and in the Basic Conditions Statement. The Plan does not include provision regarding 'excluded development'. The Plan relates only to one neighbourhood area (the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Area) as designated and there are no other NDPs in place for that area.

In accordance with TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B Paragraph 6 and PCPA 2004 Schedule 38B, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4, whether the neighbourhood forum has undertaken the correct procedures in relation to consultation and publicity?

- 6.9. Yes. The Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum ran a public consultation between 15 March and 25 April 2021. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, no public events could be held during the consultation period, but leaflets announcing the consultation were hand-delivered to residents and businesses within the neighbourhood area, an online survey was conducted via the forum's email lists, and the statutory consultees were contacted. A copy of the neighbourhood plan was made available on the forum's website, and a copy was sent to the Council along with an announcement that the consultation would be taking place. Details of the consultation activities (including activities undertaken at earlier stages of the neighbourhood plan development process) can be found in Appendices 2-3.

Conclusion

- 6.10. As outlined above, the submission of the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan is considered to comply with the relevant criteria and the plan should therefore proceed to consultation and examination.
- 6.11. It is not the Council's role at this stage to assess compliance of the neighbourhood plan with the basic conditions – at this point, the Council can only assess whether the Forum has provided a statement setting out their own assessment of how the plan meets the basic conditions. The Regulation 16 consultation period, held before the examination of the plan, provides an opportunity for the Council and other stakeholders to make representations on the plan, including how it complied with the basic conditions.

Next Steps

- 6.12. If Cabinet approves the recommendations of this report, the Council will be responsible for arranging an independent examination of the neighbourhood plan, and for publicising the plan and inviting representations on it.
- 6.13. The consultation period will be eight weeks to take account of the holiday period, and is expected to run between 1 December and 28 January 2022, after the call-in period for this decision has expired. The plan will be made available on the Council's website. Depending on regulations and guidance relating to the coronavirus pandemic, hard copies may also be made available at the Town Hall reception and in the closest Idea Store to the neighbourhood area, at Bow. A public notice will be placed in a local newspaper, and an email will be sent to the planning policy database, to any other consultee referred to in the submitted consultation statement, and to the list of respondents to the Regulation 14 consultation which the Forum has provided to the Council as part of the submission.

- 6.14. The examiner of the neighbourhood plan will be appointed by the Council, with the consent of the Forum. The Council will cover the costs of the examination, and will provide the examiner with all the submitted documents and any representations received during the consultation period. The examination is expected to begin immediately after the consultation period ends. It is expected that the examination will be based on written representations, without the need for a public hearing, in line with paragraph 056 of the government's Neighbourhood Planning Guidance. However, this is at the examiner's discretion.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Officers have used the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Screening tool to consider impacts on people with the protected characteristics outlined in the Equalities Act 2010 (Appendix 5). It is considered that the proposals in this report do not have any adverse effects on people who share the protected characteristics and no further action is required at this stage.

8. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
- 8.2. Best Value Implications: During the determination of the submission the Council has worked with the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum where appropriate, and in line with our neighbourhood planning guidance, having regard to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, and in conformity with the statutory requirements as detailed in the relevant legislation.
- 8.3. Consultations: See paragraph 6.9 above, and Appendices 2-4.
- 8.4. Environmental Implications: There is a statutory requirement to determine whether neighbourhood plans require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), and for such assessments to be undertaken if necessary. The Council undertook an SEA/HRA screening of the draft neighbourhood plan before submission, and concluded that neither an SEA nor an HRA is required. This decision was published by the Council on 12 October 2020, and is provided as Appendix 7.

9. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 9.1. There are no material financial implications emanating from this report which recommends taking forward the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan to the next stage of consultation and examination. Costs will be incurred obtaining an independent examination and from any appeals. These costs are anticipated to be less than £10k and will be managed from within the approved budgetary provision.
- 9.2. There are likely to be financial implications if the plan is formally adopted, for example the use of CIL monies, where 25% of CIL collected in the neighbourhood area should be spent in that area. These implications will be reflected in the MTFs should the plan pass consultation and examination.

10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 10.1. This report seeks the Cabinet to approve the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan to be submitted for examination, on the basis that it is compliant with the Neighbourhood Planning General regulations 2012.
- 10.2. Pursuant to section 9D of the Local Government Act 2000 all functions of an authority are executive functions unless they are specified as not in either the 2000 Act or the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended). The decision on whether a neighbourhood development plan meets the statutory requirements and should proceed to referendum is not a specified function and is a decision for the Executive. The Executive is also authorised to consider the proposed recommendations in this report as a 'Key Decision' as defined in Section 3 of the Council's Constitution. Paragraph 6 of Section 3 of the Constitution defines 'Key Decision' as an executive decision which is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions. As stated above in this report, this Neighbourhood Plan if implemented will have a significant effect on the wards that lie within the boundary of the identified neighbourhood area as it will comprise a material planning consideration in the assessment of new planning applications within this area.
- 10.3. Section 116 of the Localism Act 2011 makes provision for local communities to bring forward planning proposals at a local level. That Act (which amended the TCPA 1990 to make provision for neighbourhood planning), the PCPA 2004 and the subsequent 2012 Regulations confer specific functions on the Council relation to neighbourhood planning.
- 10.4. Together this legislation sets out what must be included with the submission of a NDP, and the matters which the Council must consider in reaching a view on whether the NDP should proceed to publication. It is considered that the proposed plan is in line with the relevant criteria and the plan should therefore proceed to publication and examination.

- 10.5. Following regulation 16 publication the Council must, with the consent of the Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood forum, appoint an independent examiner in accordance with Paragraph 7 of Schedule 4B of the TCPA 1990. The examiner must consider whether the NDP meets the requirements as set out in legislation and produce a report recommending whether NDP should go to a referendum.
 - 10.6. Once the Council has received the Examiner's report, it must consider the recommendations, take a view on whether the basic conditions are satisfied, and what action to take in response to the recommendations. If the NDP passes examination the Council must arrange a referendum.
 - 10.7. If ratified at referendum, the Council must publicise the plan and bring it in to force. If made, the NDP will become a statutory plan carrying equal weight to the Local plan which means that it will form part of the key planning policy against which planning applications and permissions in principle will be assessed.
 - 10.8. When making decisions on an NDP the Council must have due regard to the need to achieve objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate conduct that is prohibited by the act, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, which is also known as the public sector equality duty.
 - 10.9. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken in respect of the proposed NDP and it is considered that the plan does not have any adverse effects and no further action is required at this stage. Members must consider the EQIA when reaching a decision.
-

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- N/A

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan
- Appendix 2: Consultation Statement
- Appendix 3: Summary of Consultation Responses
- Appendix 4: Basic Conditions Statement
- Appendix 5: Equalities Impact Assessment Screening
- Appendix 6: SEA/HRA Screening Determination Letter

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

Marc Acton Filion, Planning Officer, Plan-Making Team