

**Designation of Limehouse Neighbourhood Planning Forum
Consultation Statement
January 2021**

Introduction

1. On 24 November 2020, the Limehouse Community Forum applied to the Council to be designated as the Neighbourhood Planning Forum for the Limehouse Neighbourhood Planning Area. The application was assessed to be in keeping with the relevant regulations, and in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 a public consultation period was held between 3 December 2020 and 27 January 2021. This was more than the required 6 weeks, in order to account for the holiday period which fell in the middle of the consultation, and to ensure that all interested parties had suitable opportunity to submit responses.
2. The consultation had originally been planned to end on 22 January 2021. However, after the consultation had begun, it emerged that there was a mistake on the application form. The form stated that the forum's application to be re-designated had the full support of Limehouse councillor James King. This was not accurate, and the forum stated it had been mistakenly copied over from an earlier draft. After discussion between officers, the councillor, and members of the neighbourhood forum, it was agreed that the sentence would be removed from the application form and the consultation would be extended by five days (the amount of time the erroneous form had been available).
3. This document provides an overview of matters raised during the consultation period. This paper has been prepared for public information and to inform the Council's decision making process – it is not intended to address any of the issues raised during the consultation period.

Consultation activities undertaken by the Council

4. Consultation activities undertaken by the Council were carried out in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and the principles expressed in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The activities undertaken were as follows:
 - The application form, supporting materials, and consultation information were placed on the Council's website
 - The same information was sent directly to the elected councillors for the Limehouse and Shadwell wards
 - An email announcing the consultation and explaining where the relevant information could be found was sent to everyone on the Plan Making Team's consultation database
 - A public notice was published in the Docklands & East London Advertiser

- Due to government guidance around the coronavirus pandemic, hard copies of the consultation material were not made available at the Town Hall or in Idea Stores close to the neighbourhood planning area on this occasion – respondents were encouraged to contact the Plan Making team if this caused any difficulties

Approach to categorising representations made

5. During the public consultation period, the public are able to make representations on the contents of forum application submitted to the Council. Typically, representations are made by local residents, local Councillors, landowners, businesses, interests groups, statutory consultees and neighbouring Local Authorities. Representations were not made by all parties directly consulted.
6. Annex 1 presents representations in date order. Where an individual has submitted more than one response, these have been grouped together and counted as one representation. The following categories have been used to categorise representations:

Support	Have stated explicit support, or support has been inferred from the contents of the representation
Object	Have stated explicit objection, or objection has been inferred from the contents of the representation
Neutral	Have offered comments but not determined if they object or support the application, or have stated 'no objection' to the application without explicitly supporting it
Petition	A written objection signed by multiple signatories
No comment	Where no comment has been made and no position on the matter can be inferred
Concerned	Do not state they object but highlight areas of concern

Summary of representations

Number of representations received

Support	Objection	Neutral	No comment	Petition	Concerned	Total
6	23	2	5	0	2	38

7. A total of 38 responses were received to the consultation.
8. No comment: One of the responses, from Sport England, provided generic comments on the role of sports in neighbourhood planning, but did not address any of the specifics of this particular neighbourhood forum application, and has therefore been treated as a 'no comment'. Transport for London, Natural

England, the Canal and River Trust and the Environment Agency stated they have no comments to make on the application.

9. Neutral: Historic England stated they have no objection to the application, and did not wish to provide detailed comments. The Port of London Authority also stated they have no objection.
10. Positive: Six positive responses were received from individuals. These responses were generally short and provided no additional detail as to why the Forum is supported (although it is not unusual for supporting emails to be written in this way).
11. Negative: 23 negative responses were received from individuals. The text of these objections (and all other representations) can be read in Annex 1. The objections covered a wide range of topics, including:
 - Lack of neighbourhood planning activity by the Forum, lack of interest in neighbourhood planning, and the Limehouse Community Forum holding its neighbourhood planning sub-committee at arm's length rather than neighbourhood planning being an integral part of the Forum's function.
 - Lack of concern with the environmental wellbeing of the area, with respondents claiming that the Forum's environmental activities extended only to a gardening club, with no concern for other environmental issues.
 - Significant disagreement over the creation of a new constitution for the Forum, including accusations that due process was not followed in the development and approval of the constitution.
 - The Forum's demographic make-up not being representative of the wider Limehouse area.
 - Respondents feeling that they had felt excluded from the Forum.
 - Suggestions that an alternative group had formed that would like to apply to be the neighbourhood forum.
 - Concern over the actions of some of the Forum's members, with two responses making accusations of 'bullying'.
12. The above is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of the negative responses, but to provide an overview of some of the major causes for concern that were raised. The text of all responses can be read in Annex 1 below, and the Cabinet report for this matter will discuss the impact of these responses and the final officer recommendation.
13. Concerned: Two responses were categorised as raising concerns without being explicitly against the designation of the forum. One of these, from an individual, raised similar issues to the negative responses. The other, from the SPLASH community group (which is also the neighbourhood forum for the adjacent Poplar area), raised concern that there was a lack of representation from some of the estates that work with SPLASH but are within the Limehouse neighbourhood planning area.

14. Below are two annexes, the first presenting the main text of all the responses received during the consultation period; the second reproducing the text of a longer document from May 2020 that was submitted with one of the representations, and raises concerns about the process of creating the forum's new constitution.

Annex 1: Consultation Responses

[The consultation responses have been ordered by date and colour-coded as negative, concerned, neutral, positive, or no comment. At the request of Cllr James King, and due to concerns that some representations make accusations of bullying, representations from residents have been presented anonymously, and identifying information has been removed as far as is reasonably possible – the main exception being where respondents have referred to their own roles or previous roles in the Forum. The response from Reverend Richard Bray has not been anonymised, as the issue of the Reverend’s membership of the Forum is directly related to claims made in another response. The entire main body of each response from residents has been included, leaving out openings and closings. Some text has been removed from some of the organisational responses where this related more broadly to neighbourhood planning and did not directly address the issue of the neighbourhood forum designation.]

Reference	Respondent	Status	Comments
1	Sport England (04/12/20)	No Comment	<p>Government planning policy, within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), identifies how the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Encouraging communities to become more physically active through walking, cycling, informal recreation and formal sport plays an important part in this process. Providing enough sports facilities of the right quality and type in the right places is vital to achieving this aim. This means that positive planning for sport, protection from the unnecessary loss of sports facilities, along with an integrated approach to providing new housing and employment land with community facilities is important.</p> <p>It is essential therefore that the neighbourhood plan reflects and complies with national planning policy for sport as set out in the NPPF with particular reference to Pars 96 and 97. It is also important to be aware of Sport England’s statutory consultee role in protecting playing fields and the presumption against the loss of playing field land. Sport England’s playing fields policy is set out in our Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document.</p>
2	Port of London Authority (09/12/20)	Neutral	<p>Thank you for consulting the Port of London Authority (PLA) on the two Neighbourhood Planning consultations being undertaken within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets for the re-designation of the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Forum and the Limehouse Neighbourhood Forum.</p> <p>To confirm the PLA has no objection to the re-designation of the two Neighbourhood Forums.</p>

3	Transport for London (11/12/20)	No Comment	Thank you for consulting Transport for London (TfL). I can confirm that we have no comments to make on the application to re-designate Limehouse Neighbourhood Forum. We have a number of interests and assets in the designated area including the DLR and the A13 and so we look forward to liaising with the Forum as they begin work on a draft Neighbourhood Plan.
4	Historic England (11/12/20)	Neutral	We have no objections to the renewal of the Neighbourhood Forum as submitted, and do not wish to comment in detail.
5	Individual Response (14/12/20 and 18/12/20)	Negative	<p>I wish to lodge my objection to the LCF's application for re-designation.</p> <p>The group has had five years or more to deliver a plan and it has not done so. I believe that its motivation for renewing its designation is self serving, rather than in the best interests of the Limehouse environment.</p> <p>The LCF is neither an open nor transparent group and, in my view, has used questionable practices in the past year in order to change its constitution and re-elect its Chair. (14/12/20)</p> <p>Approximately 1 year ago the LCF publicly claimed that the Tower Hamlets Planning Department had ruled its 5 year old constitution to be unlawful. Several LCF Members, including myself and Cllr James King requested that this claim either be substantiated or withdrawn. It was neither substantiated nor withdrawn.</p> <p>Secondly, the LCF constitution made no provision for electronic voting, only by a show of hands at a properly constituted EGM. The LCF duly scheduled an EGM, before the first lockdown, but permitted no discussion of their proposed constitution, despite the fact that around 30 LCF Members showed up for the meeting at the designated time and place.</p> <p>In fact this EGM was not a meeting at all and only one LCF officer was in attendance to take votes. Whilst, Covid 19 has changed the way in which Groups meet and vote, this was not the main driver for the electronic vote in this case. I know of at least 30 Limehouse residents who would strongly contend that the LCF does not have a legitimate constitution.</p>

			<p>Turning to the LCF application. I believe that they are hugely overstating their environmental credentials and achievements. For example, LIMEgreen was consistently described as a gardening club during my tenure as an LCF officer during 2019, and you might conclude that the motivation for LCF is purely to find favour in the eyes of The Council. No LCF member meetings have been held to debate or understand any broadening scope of a green platform. In fact, the LCF has not held a single Members meeting during the whole of 2020. (18/12/20)</p>
6	<p>Individual Response (14/12/20 and 20/01/21)</p>	Negative	<p>I wish to lodge my objection to the LCF's application for re-designation.</p> <p>The group has had five years or more to deliver a plan and it has not done so. I believe that its motivation for renewing its designation is self serving, rather than in the best interests of the Limehouse environment.</p> <p>The LCF is neither an open nor transparent group and, in my view, has used questionable practices in the past year in order to change its constitution and re-elect its Chair. (14/12/20)</p> <p>Regarding the Limehouse Community Forum (lcf) asking for redesignation as Neighbourhood Planning Forum. They have had Five years and failed to create a Neighbourhood Plan. Giving them another five will just delay and lose more opportunities for in particular Green Space Designation. We have already lost areas and will lose more due to there inabilities or other commitments LimeFest for one which there do very well. I think they should let others who have more time/less commitments to get this in place very much fast and high spec in less than five years.</p> <p>There idea of the Enviroment is to plant a few flowers here and there to make the place look nicer. Which does little to nothing to improve the Air Quality.</p> <p>Also there constitution is undemocratic</p> <p>There is at least one other group in the area who really are trying to impove the enviroment including greening(green walls/roofs) reducing CO2 ommisions and other noxious gassess from car emissions. And</p>

			would like to be the designated Neighbourhood Planning Forum. But as there can only be one then they cannot even apply until there is a vacancy which can only happen if (lcf) are no longer designated. (20/01/21)
7	Individual Response (16/12/20)	Positive	I would like to formally support the changes proposed.
8	Individual Response (29/12/20 and 25/01/21)	Negative	<p>I OBJECT to the re appointment of the Limehouse Community Forum as a authorised Neighbourhood Planning Forum, I base my objections on the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of any planning actually being made despite them already being a designated Planning Forum for the past 5 years - no official responses to the over development in Limehouse despite the opportunity to present a plan for Limehouse to make it a lovely place to live and work (which the council says is its goal) - no plans for the area being proposed at all - Total lack of engagement in the community - this has been especially evident over this pandemic - The LCF is run like a mini mafia- its either agree with the Chair (who I'm not even sure is in this country at the moment, but suspect he is in Florida) and Co chair or you are pushed out. It is due to their nasty bullying tactics that there has been no progress in Limehouse despite other more team and community orientated residents wanted to be involved (myself included by I couldn't cope with their 'approach'). <p>I would propose this is re put out to tender and propose the Friends of Limehouse group that is a community minded group of individuals that are focussed on all elements of the community. (29/12/20)</p> <p>I am writing in objection to the Limehouse Community Forum's application for re-designation as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum.</p> <p>I am a long term Limehouse resident, and have attended LCF meetings when possible. I was also involved in the LCF as a more active member until the toxic nature of the running of the LCF (by the Chairman and select long term members) forced me to leave active participation as it was not a cohesive, team and community orientated environment.</p>

During the time the LCF has been active it has been successful in creating and building Limefest, the History nights but it has done nothing towards building or running a Neighbourhood Planning Forum. It has failed to produce a neighbourhood plan in the five years since its designation, it has failed in its view into the continued (and unsuitable_ planning in and around Limehouse- an example being the overall tall tower block by Westferry DLR that will create light pollution, toxic fumes pollution, will add too many people/ cars/ taxis and is unsuitable to the area, damaging this already very crowded part of the Borough.

Some of the reasons the LCF is not equipped to produce a neighbourhood plan:

- 1) The Limehouse Community Forum membership is not representative of the people who live in Limehouse. It remains an exclusive group of people that is not welcoming to other joining.
- 2) It does not encourage diversity of people or thought- in fact it positively discourages anyone questioning the Chair and close team who run the LCF.
- 3) Membership to the LCF is restricted under the current constitution. Under section 4B of the application form, in reference to the current constitution, it is stated that 'membership is open to all who live, work, or have a business in the NP area'. However, it fails to point out that Limehouse residents are no longer automatically LCF members. They must first apply and then be approved by the Chair and his Executives. The Chair is entitled to appoint as many Vice-chairs as he wishes, enabling him to secure a majority of the Executives votes, allowing him to refuse membership to those whose opinions he does not approve.
- 4) The LCF has failed to support the NPF and only actually attended one meeting to discuss the Neighbour Planning Forum. There is no focus on the Planning Forum, BUT the Chair wants to be able to veto anything the NPF proposed. In reality the NPF has achieved NOTHING under the LCF.
- 5) I am not aware of any efforts by the NPF under the LCF to reach out to community members to solicit their views on what the Neighbourhood should look like- and how to make it a great place to live and work for all. In fact, over this last year I have heard NOTHING from the LCF or the NPF at all- and am not even sure if the present Chair is even in this country- let alone Limehouse.
- 6) the NPF has no projects in flight or working or any projects and has completed no projects.

The LCF is not the forum to run a NPF. Limehouse needs a NPF urgently- but one that is well managed, open, inclusive, and will make this area a better place to live and work. (25/01/21)

9	Individual Response (07/01/21)	Positive	I am writing in support of the current Limehouse Neighbourhood Forum being renewed.
10	Natural England (15/01/21)	No Comment	Natural England does not wish to make comment on the suitability of the proposed plan area or the proposed neighbourhood planning body.
11	Individual Response (18/01/21)	Negative	<p>I am writing to object to the application for resedignation of the Limehouse Community Forum as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum.</p> <p>The Limehouse Community Forum has never tried to do any outreach work. It has never tried to engage the whole of the local community, in particular the BAME community, so how is it suited to represent me?</p> <p>In fact, the Limehouse Community Forum serves as a gatekeeper, keeping resources and knowledge out of reach of the residents it supposedly serves.</p> <p>I read with interest the application and all the claims the forum made of the things it accomplished. I find it interesting that neither I nor my neighbours knew anything about it. Can it be because the only interests it serves are of those represented in the board? If no one that looks like me is there how can it claim to represent me? In fact, I would urge an investigation into whether there is an equal opportunities policy in place and if this is being actively upheld or if, as I suspect, discrimination and gatekeeping is rife. I truly believe that the board is keeping BAME communities from having their voices heard or accessing its resources.</p> <p>Moreover, the Limehouse Community Forum is best known for its annual fete in Ropemakers field and little else of any real value to the community. I must say, however that posters for this fete, never reach past Cyril Jackson Primary school. It is as if anything past Gill Street didn't exist. And let's, face it a fete is without a doubt the most inconsequential thing a Community forum can do.</p> <p>Limehouse ward encompasses more than just the Limehouse marina, it encompasses a rich and diverse community with complex issues. If, however, you attended any of the Limehouse Community Forum meetings,</p>

			<p>you would be forgiven if you thought that the meetings were about anything other than the Limehouse neighbourhood.</p> <p>I strongly urge you to not approve the Limehouse redesignation application as I fear it will serve as both a deterrent and as gatekeeper for BAME communities to both access resources and having their concerns taken into consideration when completing neighbourhood plans, thus exacerbating the many social – economic issues already faced by this community.</p>
12	Individual Response (18/01/21 and 26/01/21)	Negative	<p>I would not support renewal of the existing group.</p> <p>As a statutory body in my judgement, the LCF has not been managed appropriately. May I ask if you have understood the representations from other Limehouse resident as to providing evidence please.</p> <p>Apologies this is coming late and close to end of consultation period.</p> <p>Also the community has been unrepresented by LCF.</p> <p>Neighbours have regularly asked for accounts over the years and to my knowledge these have not been made available (if you have these it would be good to see them).</p> <p>After five years there has not been a Neighbourhood Plan as required.</p> <p>Due to current circumstances communications between Limehouse residents has been very difficult. Normally we would have met and written to you formally.</p> <p>I hope others with more knowledge than I have been in touch.</p> <p>There have been meetings last year that were chaotically run by LCF, embarrassing to those who attended.</p> <p>Sorry - this is the best I can provide this evening - I feel it could be “the tip of the iceberg”. (18/01/21)</p>

			<p>[In response to the second paragraph of the above email, the Plan Making team replied to explain the neighbourhood planning regulations and what could be taken into account in making the designation. The email below was received in response to this]</p> <p>The judgement by many in Limehouse on the fifth point [relating to the considerations in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 61F(7), on the 'desirability' of designating a forum which is drawn from different areas and sections of the community] is a definite no. There are people who have felt excluded and decision making had been not transparent over the years.</p> <p>I have not seen any neighbourhood plan and have not been able to track down the results of reports that "consultants" paid to advise on it.</p> <p>This has caused a most unhelpful divide in our little community, my judgement also comes from observing whilst attending meetings, talking to individuals and attempting to extract information on proceedings plans etc.</p> <p>So - to conclude this - I would not support the redesignation. I would look to helping a new group form and apply for designation if you decide to turn down this application, which in my opinion would be what is best for Limehouse. (26/01/21)</p>
13	Environment Agency (20/01/21)	No Comment	<p>We have no comments to make at this stage, however, depending on the environmental risks or opportunities within these areas, we may comment at the later stages of these neighbourhood plan. We will focus our detailed engagement on those areas where the environmental risks are greatest.</p> <p>We encourage the Neighbourhood Forum to seek ways in which their neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment. For your information, together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/consider-environment-neighbourhood-plans/</p>

14	Canal and River Trust (21/02/21)	No Comment	Based on the information available our substantive response (as required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)) is that the trust has no comment to make on the proposal.
15	Individual Response (21/01/21)	Negative	<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Until April last year I was the longest serving active member of LCF, joining in January 2007 a few months after it was established. I am a passionate supporter of the LCF concept, have been involved in all its activities and was the first member, after the chair, on the application form for LCF to be designated the neighbourhood forum for Limehouse, as approved by LBTH in December 2015.</p> <p>However, I am opposed to the re-designation of the LCF as the neighbourhood forum for Limehouse now as I believe it is unqualified to hold that title and incapable of producing the required neighbourhood plan. In addition, for the LCF to hold the designation for a further 5 years would prevent others from doing so and achieving this important task.</p> <p>In explaining my view, I will refer to Governance, Community Representation, and Effectiveness. Where relevant, I will also refer to the clause numbers within section 61F of the amended Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as required to meet the conditions of the Localism Act 2011 for the designation of a neighbourhood forum.</p> <p>To support my position I attach the following documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Statement of Evidence on the management of LCF produced by former officers and/or long-standing LCF members. 2. An email regarding 2016 LIMEfest and Ramadan. 3. Limehouse Youth Support Group meeting minutes. <p><u>Governance</u></p> <p>Whilst there are many admirable activities which residents associated with LCF undertake, for some time now the chair and some supporting officers have been acting unconstitutionally, without transparency and in a</p>

			<p>generally improper manner. The attached Statement of Evidence with Appendices provides a sample of these actions between January 2019 and April 2020.</p> <p>These included but are not limited to a series of events covered in the Statement where, in order to dictate how LCF should continue to operate, the incumbent chair and vice chairs unconstitutionally and undemocratically contrived the voting for a new constitution and to retain the incumbent chair. As a neighbourhood forum these actions contravened clause (5)(d) section 61F of the Act, referring to a required constitution which, to be of any purpose, must be followed.</p> <p>The minutes of the 10th April 2019 LCF meeting (Statement Appendix A) describes how the LCF chair read out a previously unseen resolution to remove an officer. Following opposition to this undebated resolution, the minutes said of the chair “He stated that if it were not passed this evening, it is within his power to suspend the LCF and cancel the upcoming planned events”, for which he had no authority. The resolution was carried on the night. It seems clear the main purpose of the resolution was to dismiss, or have resign, the LCF secretary who had led a team in preparing a new constitution worded contrary to the chair’s personal views. This improper action followed many others by the chair and close officers which sufficiently aggrieved the LCF secretary to cause him to resign on 9th May 2019 (Appendix B)</p> <p>This type of behaviour continued when in January 2020 a long serving LCF member applied to stand for election as chair, under the conditions of the existing constitution of 2015, at an AGM scheduled for 29th January 2020. The incumbent chair initially attempted to thwart the application by falsely claiming it inconsistent with the constitution (Appendix E). When this failed, he then claimed the existing constitution was “unlawful” and alleged there was need for a new constitution in order for a chair election to take place (Appendix H). This again was untrue. Whilst the existing constitution needed amendment to clarify the difference between representative and private members, it had been approved by LBTH for LCF’s designation as a neighbourhood forum in 2015, and used for the re-election of the incumbent chair each year since that date. In correspondence to members, the LCF chair stated that the LBTH had agreed the 2015 constitution was unlawful, which was untrue as they had not agreed. LBTH were aware of the chair’s false statement but issued no denial, thereby allowing LCF members to believe LBTH agreed with the chair.</p>
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			<p>events, it is clear that LCF is run by and for a single socio-economic and ethnic (white British) section of the Limehouse community. This ethnic section represents around 40% of the Limehouse population. Any involvement of the other diverse sections of the Limehouse community is sporadic. As a neighbourhood forum, this contravenes clause (7)(a) section 61F of the Act, referring to the requirement that membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area, from different sections of the community, and reflects the character of the area.</p> <p>Whilst other sections of the community are not prevented from being involved with the LCF, they are not encouraged, and sometimes are resisted by those who predominantly run the organisation. In January 2016, after LCF had been designated as a neighbourhood forum, members anxious to reach out to other sections of the community requested that the date of the LCF annual summer festival, LIMEfest, was moved forward by one week to avoid Ramadan. It would have been simple to change the date of the event 6 months ahead of time, and would then not have discouraged the Muslim community from engaging with the LCF. Following an exchange of emails with those running LIMEfest, the proposed revision was rejected by the LCF chair, and his email is attached. In that decision, beyond a disregard for a significant section of the Limehouse community, it is revealing to hear the chair raise the possibility that “parents are imposing a particular dogma” with their religious beliefs.</p> <p>In 2016, concerned about the long-standing problem of ASB across Limehouse, a group of LCF members took advice from senior police officers and youth specialists to pursue a comprehensive approach to solve the problem through youth engagement instead of concentrating only on enforcement. This was taken up with the Borough Mayor who authorised a standing meeting under a Deputy Mayor to help develop a partnership of authorities, providers of funding, facilities, youth expert and the community, to address the problem through engagement. This formula has proved successful both locally and across the UK where large reductions in crime and ASB have been achieved. As part of the community involvement, in 2017 a Limehouse Youth Support Group (LYSG) was established in the eastern part of Limehouse where most of the young people live. LYSG meeting minutes are attached. This was an important part of establishing engagement with young people and their diverse community. In March 2018, whilst the partnership and youth support was being progressed and without the knowledge of the LCF members involved, the LCF chair suddenly advised the Mayor that the LCF wished instead to establish a so called Youth Ward Panel, which would meet every 3</p>
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months at the Limehouse Youth Centre to assist with Centre activities. The Partnership and LYSG initiative was therefore discontinued. This was another lost opportunity to involve the wider community as required of a neighbourhood forum.

Effectiveness

The LCF was established for wider community benefit from a resident group initially formed to undertake a summer's fete in 2006. Social events have always featured prominently and are well produced and attended. Other activities, such as responding to crime, ASB and planning applications, are largely reactive, subsidiary and undertaken in separate groups. These groups come together for large events, such as the summer LIMEfest, but otherwise are responsible for their own development, marketing and membership. This applies to the group trying to produce the neighbourhood plan. The LCF chair and close officers present the public face of LCF but are only involved with the groups in which they are interested, and take no part in coordination between the groups. Whilst registered members number around 600 in LCF, rarely are there more than about 12 active members in total at any one time.

When LCF was designated as a neighbourhood forum in 2015, of the 21 residents on the application form only 3 subsequently attended any neighbourhood forum meetings. This includes the LCF chair who has attended just one meeting in 5 years. The group has had to develop without organised support from LCF as a whole and generally has around 6 members for meetings, well short of the number needed to produce a neighbourhood plan. It is understandable that this has not been achieved in 5 years. None of these 6 are included in the 2020 re-designation application and, to my knowledge, none of the 21 members in that application have ever attended a neighbourhood forum meeting in the current 5 year period, except for the LCF chair's attendance on one occasion.

Whilst its social events and meetings are popular and serve a valuable function for a section of the Limehouse community, with its current structure and method of operating the LCF fails on the delivery of one of its core objectives which is to protect and improve Limehouse. Similarly **as a neighbourhood forum, other than social activities for a section of the community, it does not meet the requirements of clause (5)(a) section 61F of the Act, to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area.**

			<p><u>Conclusions</u></p> <p>As a long-standing member of LCF, I'm a passionate supporter of its concept and believe there are many admirable activities which residents associated with LCF undertake which serve a valuable function for a section of the Limehouse community. However, I am opposed to the re-designation of the LCF as the neighbourhood forum for Limehouse as I now believe it is unqualified to hold that title.</p> <p>Under the headings of Governance, Community Representation, and Effectiveness, I have demonstrated that the LCF does not meet the statutory requirements to be re-designated as a neighbourhood forum. This assertion is based on, amongst other things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. not adhering to a constitution; 2. not having members from different places of the neighbourhood, from different sections of the community, and reflecting the character of the area; 3. not able to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the whole area. <p>Beyond not having the qualifications, I believe that due to its structure and method of operating it is incapable of producing the required neighbourhood plan which it has failed to do as a designated neighbourhood forum over the past 5 years. In addition, if LCF were to hold the designation for a further 5 years it would prevent others from doing so and achieving this important task. If LBTH approves the re-designation of LCF as the neighbourhood forum for Limehouse, the evidence I've presented suggests LBTH should be held accountable for that decision.</p> <p>[A pdf was attached entitled 'Statement of Evidence – Management of the Limehouse Community Forum – May 2020', signed by five people who call themselves 'concerned LCF members'. Four of these five members have also submitted representations to this consultation. The content of this pdf is reproduced in Annex 2 below]</p>
16	Individual Response (22/01/21)	Positive	This email is to register my support for the Limehouse NPF.

17	Individual Response (22/01/21)	Negative	<p>I am writing in objection to the Limehouse Community Forum's application for re-designation as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum.</p> <p>As a Limehouse resident, I was involved with the Limehouse Community Forum from 2011 until 2019 and served as secretary for 3 of those years, in addition to running various programs and helping out with others, writing grant applications for funding, and attending numerous meetings, both formal and off-the-record, with the Chair and his Vice-chairs.</p> <p>Based on that experience, I feel that the LCF is very adept at running entertaining and informative social events and projects - it's LIMEfest summer festival and History Night proved very popular. However, it is seriously lacking in the basic requirements for running a successful Neighbourhood Planning Forum, as evidenced by its inability to have produced a neighbourhood plan in the five years since its designation.</p> <p>The LCF sent an email to all its members last night (attached), urging them to write to you in support of its application for redesignation as an NPF, and listing all its achievements of 2020. While many of these are admirable, please note that none of them have any relationship at all to LCF's remit as a planning forum.</p> <p>Some of the reasons the LCF is not equipped to produce a neighbourhood plan, and the inconsistencies in its application form which relate to these, are as follows:</p> <p>1) The Limehouse Community Forum membership is not representative of the people who live in Limehouse. 41% of Limehouse residents are 'white British' according to our last census, and it's the 'white British' who the LCF represents. Of the 21 members listed under Section 3B of the application form, not one represents our large Bangladeshi community living in the east of Limehouse. There have been few attempts by the Chair to reach out to this neighbourhood. His attitude has always been that 'they know where we are should they care to join us.'</p> <p>2) Membership to the LCF is restricted under the current constitution. Under section 4B of the application form, in reference to the current constitution, it is stated that 'membership is open to all who live, work, or have a business in the NP area'. However, it fails to point out that Limehouse residents are no longer</p>
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			<p>automatically LCF members. They must first apply and then be approved by the Chair and his Executives. Those unable to apply but still wishing to participate must register. This has obviously proved daunting for many of our Bangladeshi residents and others. It should also be noted that according to the current constitution, the Chair is entitled to appoint as many Vice-chairs as he wishes, enabling him to secure a majority of the Executives votes, and thus allowing him to refuse membership to those whose opinions he does not approve. (See Sect 1a and 4.3 of LCF Constitution attached).</p> <p>3) The Chair of the LCF has always held the Neighbourhood Planning Forum at arms-length, referring to it as 'an offshoot' and insisting 'it should be able to stand independently, or else we all get painted with the same brush'.</p> <p>In an email to me on 4th Jan 2016 (attached) he stated 'The LCF should separate any and all planning responsibilities it has as the NPF, and function independently from the Forum.' He goes on to say 'The group would open itself up to new members who are only concerned with a local plan for our ward, an independent Chair and Officers would function separately, but report to the LCF, who would have the final say to approve any referendum suggested by the NPF.' Please note that throughout the application form, each and every reference made to the Forum applies to the Limehouse Community Forum, not the Neighbourhood Planning Forum. In addition, there is no indication of what the planning forum has achieved to date, instead there is a running dialogue of what the LCF is doing, none of which is relevant to a neighbourhood plan. In his desire to keep the planning forum separate, the LCF Chair has done nothing to support or promote it, and has attended only one meeting, on 14th March 2018, during its five years of existence.</p> <p>4) In reference to the other 20 members listed under Section 3B of the application form, while all are LCF members, as far as I am aware none have had anything to do with the planning forum or attended any of its meetings. Because of the lack of support from the LCF, the planning forum has had great difficulty in attracting and keeping members, and it seems likely that this lack of support will continue.</p> <p>5) Under Section 1 of the application form, relating to how the Forum will seek to promote or improve environmental well-being, it has been stated that 'LIMEgreen has been established not only for gardening projects but to address the growing issues of climate change, street use, recycling, air quality and greening.' This is simply not true. I worked with two other LCF members to set up LIMEgreen, planning and organising its</p>
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			<p>monthly planting projects. It was established as a neighbourhood gardening club, nothing more, a monthly activity to draw in people and teach them how to get their hands dirty, attracting as much publicity for the LCF as possible in the process. The LCF Chair was totally unfamiliar with the concept of climate change or air quality. At the only Neighbourhood Planning Forum meeting he did attend, when the subject of green infrastructure came up he was heard to say 'Why are we putting in green infrastructure , why don't we just have window replacements.' He was serious about this...Since my departure from LIMEgreen in 2018, up until 2020 and lockdown, the only LIMEgreen project undertaken and completed involved the construction and planting up of three wooden planters which have been placed in front of the Limehouse Youth Hub.(Photo attached). Thus the 'growing issues of climate change, street use, recycling, air quality' have yet to be addressed by the LCF.</p> <p>As previously stated, I believe the LCF is seriously lacking in the basic requirements for running a successful Neighbourhood Planning Forum and, in view of the observations and evidence above, feel it would be very inappropriate for the LCF to be redesignated.</p>
18	Individual Response (22/01/21)	Negative	<p>Please find below my objections to the redesignation of Limehouse Community Forum as the neighbourhood planning forum for Limehouse.</p> <p>I have attempted to be part of the forum previously but had to stop trying because I found out that it was run by a few friends who excluded everyone else who didn't share their desires and interests.</p> <p>The forum does not proactively advertise for attendance or views from the community. The chair does not live in the area and appears to use the forum as a way to pursue his own business interests in the area.</p> <p>I have seen the exclusion at a meeting. It was an election meeting where someone stood for Secretary of forum. The Chair and his friends were not happy with the person who stood unopposed so halted the meeting to force someone who didn't live in the area and who didn't want the position to put themselves forward to prevent him taking up the post. It transpired that the person they didn't want as part of the forum narrowly won the vote, to which it was clear the chair was very unhappy.</p>

			<p>I don't know why they are such a closed group and do not invite or welcome all views from the community in which I live but that is why I no longer participate in the forum.</p> <p>The make up of the forum is clearly not made up with a cross section of the community and I'm not sure they would welcome opposing views to their own. I certainly wouldn't feel comfortable as a gay man trying to get them to tackle those issue.</p> <p>I have no faith that if I had comments, observations or objections to any planning application that they would be given any consideration at all. The same goes for a large section of the community in Limehouse.</p>
19	Individual Response (22/01/21)	Negative	<p>I am writing to object to the application by Limehouse Community Forum (LCF) for redesignation as the neighbourhood planning body for Limehouse. I object to this application on three grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Factual inaccuracies in the application; 2. Failure to comply with statutory requirements for designation; 3. Failure to have a membership that represents different areas and sections of the community; and 4. Governance failings. <p>Background</p> <p>My objections are based on experience of the LCF, having been a resident of Limehouse since autumn 2017, a member of the LCF from 2018 to 2019 and Secretary of the LCF for the first five months of 2019. In these roles, I attended meetings of the LCF, interacted with members and held regular discussions with the executive officers (at the time and current). I resigned as a member and Secretary of LCF due to persistent concerns about the governance, accountability and transparency of the LCF. I also reached the conclusion that the LCF did not represent the local community and that those running the LCF had no interest in changing this. Finally, I resigned due to an ongoing campaign of bullying by LCF officers.</p> <p>Factual Inaccuracies</p> <p>The following sections of LCF's application are incorrect:</p>

			<p>a. “Re-designation” of the LCF/LCF structure. At a meeting on 8 April 2019 with the Chair of LCF, Mark Slankard, and the Vice Chair, Helen Kenney, Mr Slankard and Ms Kenney informed me repeatedly that LCF was not the designated Neighbourhood Planning body for Limehouse. Instead, they informed that the Limehouse NPF – and LIMEgreen (the urban gardening operation) – were wholly independent of the LCF, with LCF providing only informal support to these organisations. The link between the LCF, LIMEgreen and the neighbourhood planning body in this application is therefore false; alternatively, if it is accurate, Mr Slankard’s and Ms Kenney’s statements indicate a concerning lack of understanding of the structure of the organisation they run. (See note of this meeting attached.)</p> <p>b. Section 1c: the Royal Foundation of St Katherine is within the current designated neighbourhood area for Limehouse and not, as stated in the application, to “the west of Limehouse”. This indicates a lack of knowledge of the neighbourhood by the LCF.</p> <p>c. Section 2a/Consultation: contrary to the statement in the application, the LCF constitution does not “commit” the LCF to consultation with any other body in Limehouse (or the wider area). There is no obligation on the LCF to do so;</p> <p>d. Section 2a/Contact Details: the LCF does not have a social media presence. The Chair of LCF, Mark Slankard, confirmed to me when I was elected Secretary that the LCF does not hold a Facebook account in its own name; I was told that the account cited in the application (Facebook-LimehouseMatters) is held by the former Vice Chair, Lesley Balding. Mr Slankard confirmed to me that the LCF does not have authority to use it for LCF business. When Secretary I was not informed that LCF had a Twitter account. The account I question appears to be operated by an individual, rather than a community organisation. Posts on the account also include party political content that would not be appropriate for an independent community organisation to post (for example, the frequent retweeting of Conservative Party campaign material in the run-up to the 2018 local elections). (See screenshots.) Neither account has been publicised in any LCF communication and they do not appear on the LCF website.</p>
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			<p>Statutory Requirements LCF does not meet the following statutory requirements for designation:</p> <p>a. Per its constitution, the LCF is not established for the express purpose of “promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being” of the Limehouse neighbourhood, as required in section 61F(5)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the 1990 Act);</p> <p>b. Per its constitution, the membership is open to nominated representatives of voluntary and community groups and such members count towards the minimum membership of 21. Therefore, the constitution does not guarantee that there will be at all times a minimum of 21 members who live, work or are an elected member in the Limehouse area, as required by section 61F(5)(c) of the 1990 Act;</p> <p>Membership The LCF has not, during its current period as designated neighbourhood planning forum, ensured that its membership represents different areas and sections of the community:</p> <p>a. Failure to publicise the existence and activities of the LCF: in over three years of living in Limehouse, the LCF has not once publicised (e.g. in canvassing, block leafletting, social media or noticeboards in local parks or shops) its activities. In particular, it has not publicised the dates of, or agendas for, its regular meetings. (For example, I only discovered the existence of the LCF via our local council candidate.)</p> <p>b. Contrary to the statement in its application that it operates an “open door” policy (see section 3(b)), the Chair of LCF, Mark Slankard, made clear to me when I was Secretary that open discussion during LCF meetings was not welcome. Specifically, when I added a 15 minute “Q&A” session to the beginning of the first meeting at which I was acting as Secretary, Mr Slankard told me in writing that the LCF does not allow neighbours to address LCF meetings without prior authorisation. Mr Slankard said that “[W]e do not solicit resolutions, we do not allow resolutions to be put forward at meetings without prior scrutiny. You must be aware of the dangerous situation this would put the Forum in, if someone with dubious or questionable intentions were to show up and force an issue - this could hijack a meeting and jeopardise the work that the Forum does. I cannot</p>
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and will not allow this.” This is clearly contrary to the role of a neighbourhood planning forum to encourage a diversity of views from across the neighbourhood. (See email from Mr Slankard of 9 May 2019.)

c. As Secretary, I was informed that the LCF expects its Executive Officers to spend their own money on LCF activities. Specifically, Mr Slankard wrote to me that: “Neither I nor any other Officer has ever charged the Forum for printing 25 copies of the agenda, 25 copies of the minutes and a sign-in-sheet at any meetings. Nor would

I expect an Officer to do so. Our service to the Limehouse community comes at a cost... we even donate small amounts of money. If someone doesn't have the time, energy or spare money to help out our community then what's the point?” Such an approach excludes those with no or little disposable income – including a significant section of the Limehouse population - from engaging in LCF activities. This means that a large part of the Limehouse neighbourhood is prevented by LCF policies from playing a full role in the neighbourhood planning process. (See email from Mr Slankard of 9 May 2019.)

I also note the following issues with respect to membership:

a. Until at least 2019, the LCF had no process to ensure that those joining the LCF were eligible to stand as members (there was no verification of members);

b. Per its current constitution, the Chair may decide that Associate Members, who are not residents, workers of elected members in the Limehouse area, may vote on LCF matters, including neighbourhood planning matters. This is inconsistent with the principle of local decision-making for neighbourhood planning;

c. Per its constitution, the Executive consists of Executive Members, with Executive Members comprising, *inter alia*, a potentially unlimited number of Working Party leaders, each of whom is appointed by the Chair. The Executive has the power, in its This provision therefore provides for the Chair to decide the membership of the LCF.

Governance

			<p>There are significant concerns with respect to the governance of the LCF, which undermine confidence that it could act as an effective neighbourhood planning forum:</p> <p>a. Although designated as the relevant neighbourhood planning body for Limehouse since 2016, the current application makes no reference to any material development of the neighbourhood plan during the last five years and provides no evidence to conclude that any such development will be made if the LCF is re-designated;</p> <p>b. In my five months as Secretary no Executive Committee meetings took place (in person or virtually), despite my urging the Chair to hold a meeting; there is no provision in the constitution for Executive meetings to be held regularly;</p> <p>c. There is no collective governance amongst the Executive Committee; for example, at a general meeting in April 2019 the Chair proposed a resolution to amend the constitution, without notice to the Secretary;</p> <p>d. The LCF did not comply with the membership requirements of the constitution in force between its designation in 2016 and 2020 (e.g. it had no process to distinguish between “Representative Members” and “Private Members”);</p> <p>e. The LCF does not have a fundholder who can act as Accountable Body for the LCF (which is an unincorporated association).</p> <p>f. The constitution makes no provision for addressing conflicts of interest. (This is troubling given, by way of example, that the Chair of the LCF is an owner of an asset of community value that has previously been the subject of an application for conversion to residential premises.)</p>
20	Individual Response (23/01/21)	Positive	I am a resident of Limehouse and am writing to register my support for the renewal of Neighbourhood Planning Forum designation for the Limehouse Community Forum.

21	Individual Response (24/01/21)	Negative	<p>I am writing to object to the proposal regarding the Limehouse Neighbourhood forum.</p> <p>The Forum purports to cover the Limehouse area, it does not. The Forum concentrates on the area around Narrow Street and totally ignores Limehouse North of Commercial Road. The applications states that it welcomes all Limehouse residents, how can it do so, when all the area of Commercial Road is ignored; whilst it includes part of Ratcliff on the western side of the Basin.</p> <p>The Commercial Road boundary is so artificial. Commercial Road is the main high road through Limehouse and it does not divide the community, as historically the area has built up either side of the road. For example whilst the GP provision is on the South side of Commercial Road, the pharmacy is on the North side. Similarly the Church is on the South side of Commercial Road and the associated school is on the North side.</p> <p>My family have lived in this area for at least 225 years when my 5 x Gt Grandfather James Dunmore took his first born to be baptised at St Anne’s Church on Christmas Day 1794. To be told I do not live in Limehouse by the Limehouse Community Forum is an insult and if the Council supports this proposal that excludes many Limehouse residents, is not the way forward.</p>
22	Individual Response (24/01/21)	Negative	<p>I am writing to outline my objection to the re-designation of the Neighbourhood Planning Forum (“NPF”) for Limehouse to the Limehouse Community Forum (“LCF”).</p> <p>Having moved to Limehouse in 2017 as a young professional, I joined the LCF and then the NPF subgroup within LCF in 2018 as I thought of it as a crucial part of understanding and having input into our community for the future. The small group of members who were part of the NPF were highly dedicated and thoughtful to achieving the best for Limehouse and in a balanced way considering the need for additional housing in the area.</p> <p>What became clear to me very quickly was that the group was very isolated by the LCF, it’s parent. There was no support to either grow with new members or to publicise the work that was ongoing, which at the time was critical with the development of the Neighbourhood plan. This is surprising when LCF is so successful at promoting the events it runs such as Limefest and LimeGreen (which are genuinely successful).</p>

			<p>Being a part of the LCF and LCF's disregard of the work undertaken, there was no way that the NPF subgroup could be effective. I left being part of the NPF subgroup later that year as it was clear to me that there was very little ability to make traction in the community.</p> <p>I think the above is highlighted by LCF themselves when they list their achievements for 2020 in the email requesting that people vote for LCF to be re-designated and not one is related to neighbourhood planning (see attached)!</p> <p>As the designated entity, LCF should take responsibility for the lack of progress over the past 5 years with the NCF. <u>The isolated nature with which the NCF subgroup was treated begs the question of why LCF is trying to be re-designated at all.</u></p> <p>It would be more effective if a separate NCF is established which can integrate across the community (LCF is not representative of Limehouse borough as it has very little representation from our Bangladeshi community) and attract members who care about our borough's future.</p>
23	SPLASH (25/01/21)	Concerned	<p>I am concerned about the above Application Form from the Limehouse Forum as I do not see any representation from Grenada, Trinidad, Joseph Irwin, Providence, Bethlehem and Roche Houses or Saunders Close.</p> <p>These are some of the original blocks in the Limehouse area and seem not to be included in the proposals. Their needs are quite different from many of the more affluent Estates surrounding the Limehouse Basin. Unfortunately due to Ward configurations and Planning Forum Geographical limitations, the above blocks (several of which have been members of the SPLASH Organisation) are cut off from the Poplar Planning Forum which covers the other SPLASH Estates. Therefore all the greater urgency about ensuring their inclusion in the Limehouse Planning Forum area.</p> <p>Currently, the application to build a block of flats along side Trinidad House would mean that the Estate would lose it's one green patch and I know from experience how important Green spaces and the Environmental Impact of increased buildings is to Limehouse Forum members.</p>

			I do not think it would require a huge amount of time and energy to ensure membership and involvement of the above Blocks of flats in the Plan. Essentially , however, this needs to be a genuine involvement that represents the diverse community living in that area, not a token exercise!
24	Individual Response (25/01/21)	Negative	<p>I am writing to express my concerns at the renewal application of the Limehouse Community Forum to be the designated planning forum for Limehouse.</p> <p>The LCF does many good things as a community group, but it has not produced a neighbourhood plan in five years of office.</p> <p>The LCF also appears unrepresentative of the whole population of Limehouse. It has failed to recognise the concerns of east Limehouse residents in particular, where recent planning applications have impacted their lives.</p> <p>Accordingly, I do not support the LCF's application for redesignation.</p>
25	Individual Response (25/01/21)	Concerned	<p>As a resident of Limehouse, my observations and comments about continuing this local forum are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if Limehouse Neighbourhood Planning Forum, as a sub-committee of Limehouse Community Forum, were an active or effective group, I'm pretty sure that as a local resident I would be well aware of it and its remit. That I'm not, suggests that the planning forum is not effective. With this group having been designated for the past five years, I've neither seen nor heard about anything valuably active within their remit. • I fail to understand the need for this group when there is a formal planning consultation process through Tower Hamlets Council, with public notifications and accompanying process for an interested resident's response. So if this group was designed to have a strategic planning influence, I feel it has been passive and has nothing to show for it.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • while it may be a very poor way to assess a group from a written list, my first impression from the names of the people on the forum is that the group doesn't appear to reflect the diversity or inclusivity of the Limehouse population which, for me as a Trustee for a London-based organisation operating by Charity Commission guidelines, raises the question about how democratically-formed or representative this group is. • if Limehouse Neighbourhood Planning Forum is a subcommittee of Limehouse Community Forum, I question whether it is best practice for the Chair of both to be the same person. So while this raises the question of perceived vested or compromised interest in local affairs, a main concern is still that the Forum has been ineffective. • again, and entirely from slight observation, one of the higher profile officers of the Limehouse Neighbourhood Planning Forum once stood on a Conservative Party ticket; but while all colours are valid, democratically - we all have our different values - it raises a question about whether Limehouse Neighbourhood Planning Forum, as a sub-committee of Limehouse Community Forum colours an unstated political agenda with an angle on business across this grouping. • that there has been some criticism from a Limehouse Community Forum representative of the perceived effects around anti-social behaviour of vulnerable residents living in protected housing in Three Colt Street, the fact that the Urban Bar in the same street has attracted Licence Reviews and official records of infractions of its Licence and its Conditions, and created anti-social behaviour in the immediate area, may give pause for thought about how appropriate it is for this sub-committee of Limehouse Community Forum to be awarded continuing, extended powers.
26	Individual Response (25/01/21)	Negative	<p>I have recently become aware of the above neighbourhood planning forum and Limehouse community forum. I initially thought they were an official body within Tower Hamlets Council.</p> <p>It wasn't until I was looking through their aims and plans that I realised they were a small independent committee, supposing to represent local views. I don't feel they represent my feelings and opinions of how</p>

			<p>Limehouse should be managed. I was particularly surprised when I was looking at the names of the people on the committee to find it being chaired by the owner of the Urban Bar that I live near.</p> <p>Having lived in the area for a number of years now, I have had many sleepless nights caused by the noise and other late night activities of this premises over the years.</p> <p>There were 2 license reviews and countless complaints about noise and other ASB breaches. That plus the other points I've mentioned wouldn't give me the confidence to support or endorse this particular group.</p>
27	Individual Response (25/01/21)	Negative	<p>I understand the LCF is applying to be re-designated the Neighbourhood Planning Forum for Limehouse and want to make clear my strong objections to this for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LCF is not interested in being organised to promote or partake in neighbourhood planning matters. I have been part of LCF since 2018 and have not received any communication regarding this, yet receive multiple emails on their other events such as LIMEFest. There is a material amount of development going on in Limehouse and for this to be the case is unacceptable. - LCF does not have a diverse membership. The organisation is focussed around the marina area and Narrow St area as demonstrated by the list of members in the application form. It is not inclusive to north and central Limehouse and the Bangladeshi communities. - If the NPF is part of LCF, you therefore you need to become a member of LCF to be involved with the NPF. NPF should be separate to allow people who are interested in the NPF to take part without needing to commit to or be accountable to LCF which, when considering the point above, is not representative of the area. - In the application for re-designation, LCF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o In 1a does not provide any plans but repeats events that have been run that are completely unrelated to the NPF

			<p>o In 1b does not provide any specific Neighbourhood Plan commentary, despite that this is something that should have been developed over the past 5 years</p> <p>o In 2 refers to events that are unrelated to the NPF and as per my points above highlights the LCF's lack of interest in promoting the NPF</p> <p>I joined the NPF through the LCF in 2018 with my husband and was extremely disappointed by the minimal focus designated by LCF on this. LCF does clearly bring a number of benefits to the community through the successful events they run however the lack inclusion of the whole Limehouse community and poor execution of an effective NPF stands out.</p> <p>Other local groups should have the opportunity to apply for recognition as the designated forum on this basis.</p>
28	Individual Response (25/01/21)	Negative	<p>I'm writing to express my grave concern regarding the executive of the Lighthouse Community Forum. I do not believe that this group as currently constituted, represents me or the people of Limehouse.</p> <p>I am a regular member of LCF for many years but have not been consulted at all since at least 2019 on contributing to the non existent neighbourhood plan. We have had no meetings of any sort for over a year. No one has even seen this Plan in either draft or final form. I have requested that meetings be held on zoom but none have happened. The last meeting of LCF was 4/12/19. No meetings, consultations, drafts of the neighbourhood plan or opportunities to participate in creating or developing the plan have been forthcoming since that time.</p> <p>However in the meeting of 4/12/19 it was minuted:</p> <p>"LC explained that consultants, funded by a Locality grant, had been appointed to assist LCF to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. Workshops had taken place and a draft Plan would be prepared for consultation with the Limehouse community."</p> <p>But local members and residents have heard nothing since that time (or before - no Plan has ever been presented) and have been given no voice in the Plan whatsoever. We have no knowledge of the work done by</p>

			<p>the consultants. So a grant - from the Council? - has been used but nothing has been produced as a result? Is that correct?</p> <p>The people named on the document for redesignation submitted to you have no knowledge that their names are being included. For example, rector Richard Bray was unaware of this action by the executive and had not even been asked for permission to include his name.</p> <p>There was to be an emergency general meeting in December 2019 to determine the nature of the Constitution – this was cancelled at no notice and with no grounds for cancellation by the executive. The new constitution gave much wider and longer lasting powers to the executive and in particular the Chair. A large number of LCF members including myself were greatly concerned by this and contacted our local Councillor.</p> <p>There are local groups that would be very interested in contributing to a Neighbourhood Plan- who have not been invited to do so. Better St for Tower Hamlets, Tower Hamlets Wheelers, living streets, friends of the Earth, to name a few- all with members who live and work in Limehouse. All of these groups have continued to meet through the pandemic - why not LCF? We have local LCF members with a huge knowledge of civil engineering who have not been included in the redesignation document or invited to take part. It's also disappointing that the only faith group to be represented is the C of E when we are a very diverse community. I have put in several written requests to see the accounts of Limehouse Community Forum – and not been answered. I have concerns regarding conflict of interest with members of the executive, but I've not been able to investigate as information is being withheld. Accounts have not been available for years.</p> <p>LCF wants to give the impression members come to tri monthly meetings and met 3 times last year to look at the neighbourhood plan. This is a complete fiction as their own website shows- there are no minutes after 2019.</p> <p>There is no "Plan Making Team". There has been no opportunity for ordinary members of LCF - let alone the wider community- to join this team - to look at drafts, discuss, amend or contribute in any way. My understanding from the application document is a very small group- possibly just the executive of LCF - is the "Plan Making Team". No other member has been given a democratic opportunity to join or contribute at all on</p>
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the Neighbourhood Plan since before December 2019.

As a resident, a sustainable travel activist and chair of a London charity I would be very interested in contributing to the neighbourhood plan but my participation - and that of all Limehouse- has been blocked by the executive of the LCF. They do not represent me, ordinary LCF members or the wider community.

For further consideration:

1b "We accept that the Neighbourhood Plan which LCF is developing should be complementary to this document. Accordingly we have developed policies relating to the design, sustainability, location and environmental impact of any development planned for the ward. The membership of LCF considers that there is limited scope for large scale development and this is reflected in the plan as local adoption of the core policy document occurs".

Reads as if there is already a plan and members have been consulted. There isn't a plan and they haven't been consulted.

2a " The LCF has met at least tri-monthly for the past thirteen years" -

False. LCF has not met at all since the meeting of December 2019.

3b " As outlined above we continue to be diligent in our attempts to include everyone as members and to keep them informed about plans for the Neighbourhood Area and the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan. ."

False. no-one has been involved, kept informed from December 2019 onwards, and no Plan has been created or shared with the membership over many years.

4b." We believe the constitution has been developed in the correct fashion, "

False. The new constitution was pushed through and the normal processes going back many years whereby issues are debated face- to face at meetings (or later by Zoom) were bypassed. An emergency General Meeting to discuss concerns with the new constitution was cancelled with zero notice and no grounds for cancellation. Instead the chair set up an online vote without allowing opponents to explain their concerns. Many residents voiced their concerns about this process with Cllr James King.

29	Individual Response (26/01/21)	Negative	<p>Three reasons for my objection to Limehouse Community Planning Forum re-application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The forum's approach to what constitutes, and who constitutes, Limehouse focuses exclusively on the area south of commercial road. The wider limehouse community needs a more representative group and designation area to support equitable change in the neighbourhood. · The forum has made no meaningful attempt to engage the wider limehouse community and have not built any meaningful relationships with the communities north of commercial road since being designated in 2016. · The forum's emphasis on 'community safety' focused on policing and surveillance and its lack of concern for housing is worrying. When policing is held up as the primary solution to creating safety in a neighbourhood it closes off discussion as to what other things create a liveable neighbourhood.
30	Individual Response (26/01/21)	Negative	<p>I am writing to express my concerns at the renewal application of the Limehouse Community Forum to be the designated planning forum for Limehouse.</p> <p>The LCF does many good things as a community group, but it has not produced a neighbourhood plan in five years of office.</p> <p>The LCF also appears unrepresentative of the whole population of Limehouse. It has failed to recognise the concerns of east Limehouse residents in particular, where recent planning applications have impacted their lives.</p> <p>Accordingly, I do not support the LCF's application for redesignation.</p>
31	Reverend Richard Bray (26/01/21)	Positive	<p>Thanks for getting in touch with me. I am indeed a member of Limehouse Community Forum (and have been for a number of years).</p>

			<p>I realise that some people are unhappy about the direction of LCF, but when I was canvassed on the subject yesterday I pointed out that there was a free and fair election last year, overseen by Rev Roger Preece, which was won by the longstanding chair. I did say I didn't recall being informed that my name would be on the application for re-accreditation for the neighbourhood planning forum, but also that I had no objection to my name being included and that I would not be asking for my name to be withdrawn. I support the re-accreditation of LCF.</p>
32	Individual Response (26/01/21)	Negative	<p>I work in Limehouse and have been informed that Limehouse Community Forum are applying to become a Neighbourhood Forum.</p> <p>Whilst I appreciate that this mechanism could be extremely useful in Limehouse, it absolutely must be inclusive and encompass the true nature of the area. The proposal covers a small area and excludes vast, less affluent, parts of the community in Limehouse.</p> <p>The proposed area does include the Roche Estate, but no residents from the estate appear to be members. Barriers to participate clearly need to be addressed even within the boundaries of a smaller, more affluent section of Limehouse.</p> <p>I feel that any Neighbourhood Forum should have both of these considerations revised to ensure even and good growth in Tower Hamlets.</p>
33	Individual Response (26/01/21)	Negative	<p>I write in objection to the Limehouse Community Forum's application for re-designation as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum.</p> <p>At a time of enormous change to our cities and communities wracked by the carnage of COVID and its long term consequences, never has it been more vital to plan the future with a determination to improve the lives of all our residents.</p> <p>LCF have shown little interest in these matters during the past few years and the prospect of them rising to meet the fresh challenges with the enthusiasm or vigour needed fills me with dread.</p>

			<p>It is a time of change for all, more focussed thinking, clarity of thought and a team with a vision to pressure and help plan a way forward for Limehouse and our neighbours.</p> <p>Importantly it is also a time of opportunity, the chance to pick up the pieces, look forwards and enhance the needs and aspirations of all.</p>
34	Individual Response (26/01/21)	Negative	<p>I am writing to Object to the application for re-designation of the (LCF) Limehouse Community Forum as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum</p> <p>I was raised within the Borough of Tower Hamlets and come from an BAME background, have been living within Limehouse for the past 28 Years,</p> <p>Have had experience as a member, as well as working within the “LCF” Limehouse Community Forum. All members get regular email from the forum, the most recent email sent to all members urging them to write to you in support of its application. “which this is not”</p> <p>The Limehouse Community Forum “LCF” membership is not representative of the people who live in Limehouse. The forum only represents people at the top end of Narrow Street, there is NO local representation.</p> <p>Membership to the LCF is restricted, Limehouse residents are not automatically “LCF” members <u>and they must first apply and then be approved by the Chair and his Executives.</u></p> <p>The Chair of “LCF” The Limehouse Community Forum is not and has never been part of this great community of Tower Hamlets or Limehouse, he and his wife are registered in Orpington and have been registered there ever since the day I meet them, which is now more than 30 years ago.</p>

			The Only thing the “LCF” Limehouse Community Forum can do with lots of financial mishaps, is open and close the Lime Fest, which in turn doesn’t even represent the community, it's an event for the Chair and his Executives.
35	Individual Response (26/01/21)	Negative	<p>I have no doubt that you will have already received objections far more detailed than this one, but I want to raise a concern about the amount of time that LCF Chair Mr Mark Slankard spends in Limehouse.</p> <p>He is an American, who spends the winter months in Florida. His main Uk residence is not in Limehouse, and his pub business on 27 Three Colt Street, Limehouse is closed. I hear for good, although I admit that may be hearsay. His links to Limehouse therefore seem somewhat tenuous to me and I think that we need someone leading the planning forum for Limehouse who has more of a stake in the ward than that.</p> <p>I know that there has been no delivery of a neighbourhood plan and I have seen no evidence of any work on this throughout the whole of 2020. I would not accept that the Covid crisis prevented progress on this plan either, it is mainly desk based work and they have had five years to do it.</p> <p>Therefore, I do not think the LCF is a suitable group to be the designated planning forum for Limehouse. My impression is that Mr Slankard is only interested in the badge of recognition by the local authority to serve his other interests.</p>
36	Individual Response (26/01/21)	Positive	Please may I register my support for the proposed Limehouse Neighbourhood Plan for 2021.
37	Individual Response (27/01/21)	Negative	<p>I wish to highlight my reservations regarding the application by the Limehouse Community Forum to be renewed as the designated planning forum for the Limehouse area.</p> <p>The LCF operates as a community group, but to my knowledge it has not produced a broader plan for the neighbourhood, certainly not within recent years. Despite offering value in some specific areas, I'm not confident the group would be capable of successfully implementing a properly balanced and holistic approach to the environmental, social, housing, retail and other needs of the area.</p>

			<p>All key decisions, such as planning applications, should be viewed through such a lens, but for example the recent planning applications to the east of Limehouse were not objected to by the LCF, despite strong feelings against from many of the residents in the area. This also indicates the LCF is not being fully representative of the whole ward.</p> <p>With these concerns I do not believe the LCF is well placed to operate as the forum for neighbourhood planning and accordingly object to their application for redesignation.</p>
38	Individual Response (27/01/21)	Negative	<p>As someone who as lived and worked in the area for over 15 years I admire someone trying to improve the local area however I have objections to the above application.</p> <p>I feel that the LCP's designation area is largely exclusionary of the Limehouse area and it's community as a whole. Their boundaries seem to concentrate purely on the more affluent areas based around the Marina and Newell St and completely exclude surrounding communities.</p> <p>In my many years in the local community I have seen no meaningful attempt to engage local communities or residents. Infact, very few of those I interact with, have very little to no knowledge of the organisation.</p> <p>I also find their view that increased policing and surveillance is the solution to crime, problematic. Research has shown that these methods are unfairly biased against those from black and ethnic minorities and can lead to even more divisive areas.</p> <p>I also find their membership is lacking representation in terms of race and class. We cannot start to build a better, safer Limehouse, until we are willing to fairly listen and build relationships to those living and working in the area with an equal voice for all.</p>

Annex 2: Content of 'Statement of Evidence – Management of the Limehouse Community Forum – May 2020'

[This document was submitted to the Council on 21 January 2021, as part of a representation included in the table above. The document was signed by five 'concerned LCF members'. Referenced appendices have been provided to the Council, but are not reproduced here for reasons of space.]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Statement provides evidence that the current Limehouse Community Forum (LCF) Chair Mark Slankard and other Officers of the LCF have behaved unconstitutionally, without transparency and in a generally improper manner. Their actions are not only unreasonable and often dubious, but they impact on those prepared to give their time to the LCF. The members who have produced this Statement have served either as LCF Officers or for some time as active members. Whilst the problems are long-standing, for brevity the Statement only covers the year prior to an Annual General Meeting postponed in January 2020 and an online election in April 2020.

One of many issues of concern stemmed from the decision in January 2019 to update the LCF 2015 Constitution. A working group, including a recently elected Officer as LCF Secretary, produced a draft revision. The draft was unilaterally dismissed by Mark Slankard and the group disbanded. Mark Slankard announced he would be producing a new Constitution himself. This caused discord between the Chair and the members of the working group. In response, Mark Slankard, in a later meeting, forced through a change to the existing Constitution to make it easier for an Officer, such as the Secretary, to be removed. He forced through this amendment with a threat of closing down the LCF if it were not adopted. The effect of this action was to force the Secretary to resign.

In January 2020, a long-standing and active member of LCF – Geoff Sumnall, applied to run for election as LCF Chair. Mark Slankard initially tried to prevent this application quoting false conditions of the LCF 2015 Constitution. When this failed, Mark Slankard then had his Officers and those he termed the "Executive", agree to postpone the AGM and Chair election until a new Constitution had been ratified. The reason given was that the existing 2015 Constitution was not "lawful". This was untrue as the Constitution was ratified by members in 2015 and subsequently approved by LBTH for LCF to become a designated Neighbourhood Planning Forum.

After a two month delay, to impose an unnecessary and dubious Constitution with unconstitutional voting processes, an online election for Chair was finally held on April 1st. No online voting process had been approved by members prior to these events. Some eligible members did not have access to online voting and were prevented from casting their vote. There was no independent Returning Officer appointed and the process of validating the eligibility of votes cast fell to the two LCF Vice Chairs.

Not only did the Vice Chairs support Mark Slankard but there was no access to the same information, for Geoff Sumnall's team. An independent Adjudicator was appointed to oversee and verify the results of the votes. However, during the voting process the Vice Chairs had the ability to witness and control the voting, outside adjudication. This puts the election result in serious doubt. Not only must the actions of the LCF, a group who have received financial support from LBTH and others, be reputable but they must be seen to be

reputable. When these actions are unreasonable, dubious and sometimes dishonest, those who support the LCF should be made aware of these issues.

The concerned members have produced this Statement as they feel the actions described should be brought to the attention of those who support the LCF, and those whom the LCF claims to represent.

1 . INTRODUCTION

1.01 The purpose of this Statement is to describe the actions of the Chair and Officers of the LCF since January 2019, leading to Mark Slankard's disputed re- election which was announced on 15th April 2020. Evidence will be presented which will show **Mark Slankard, with Officer support, at times acted unreasonably, without transparency, contrary to the LCF Constitution and dishonestly. The Statement will show in bold where and why each of these actions is believed to have occurred.**

1.02 The Statement has been produced by five concerned members of the LCF who have detailed knowledge of events and documentation surrounding the actions in question. Three have served as Officers, and a fourth has been an active LCF member since shortly after its inception. Views have been taken of many other members, past and present, many of whom are dissatisfied with how the LCF is run. This greatly inhibits the issues the LCF is able to address and could explain why generally there are approximately 12 active members from about 700 registered members. This Statement, however, will only cover the aspects mentioned above in paragraph 1.01.

1.03 Whilst problems have existed for some considerable time, for brevity the Statement will deal only with:

- the year preceding a postponed AGM in January 2020 when the Officer elections would have been held,
- the events surrounding that postponed AGM,
- a cancelled EGM in March 2020 when an election could have been held,
- an online vote for a new Constitution; and,
- an online election in April 2020.

1.04 Where particularly relevant, LCF notices, meeting minutes and member letters are included as appendices, and the Statement is summarised in Section 7 Conclusions below.

2 . EVENTS PRIOR TO AGM JANUARY 2020

2.01. The LCF was established in 2006 and Mark Slankard was elected Chair in the following year, where he has since remained. The other Officers have changed from time to time in accordance with the LCF Constitution in force. The Constitution current in January 2020 was adopted by Members in 2015 and approved by LBTH that same year, when the LCF was designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum.

2.02 At the 29th January 2019 AGM it was agreed that the 2015 Constitution was in need of updating. The main concerns were to better define those who could vote on matters of principle, to update the names of the sub-committees and to agree a process for removing members if necessary. An official Working Group was set up to revise the 2015 Constitution.

James Mack, who had just been elected as an Officer and LCF Secretary, was included in this working group of five, chaired by Mark Slankard.

2.03 The Constitution Working Group met on several occasions but, as Mark Slankard spent most of that time abroad, the group was effectively chaired by James Mack. The draft for members approval was completed and forwarded to the LCF Officers for review on 30th April 2019. It was rejected by Mark Slankard, stating that it was 'inappropriate for a Neighbourhood Planning group'. Under protest from James Mack, **the Working Group was disbanded by Mark Slankard who advised he would produce an alternative Constitution. This action was considered unreasonable given the time spent by the Working Group and disregard for the considerable involvement of James Mack.**

2.04 At the end of the General Meeting on 10th April 2019, under Any Other Business, an **unannounced amendment** to the Constitution was read out by Mark Slankard which would give power to the LCF Officers to remove a fellow Officer by majority agreement of members. This appeared to apply directly to James Mack following his objections to the disbanding of the Constitution Working Group. Members had not received any prior notice of this amendment and were not allowed to read the motion before being asked to vote on it. **Mark Slankard informed the meeting that he would 'shut down the LCF, cancel History Night and cancel LIMFest, unless this amendment is passed now'. The manner in which the motion was raised and carried was both unreasonable and unconstitutional.** The motion was carried (Appendix A).

2.05 James Mack resigned from the LCF on 9th May 2019 (Appendix B).

2.06 At the 4th December 2019 LCF General Meeting, **Mark Slankard proposed a motion that a new Constitution be adopted on the night, despite the fact that it had only been posted on the LCF web site 2 days earlier (Appendix C).** Members did not accept this motion as there was no time for consultation and approval as required by the existing 2015 Constitution. Some of those who had read the new draft thought it too restrictive for potential LCF members and no longer showed the LCF as member-led. When pressed, Mark Slankard agreed to a period of consultation and said he would respond in due course to comments arising. **This motion to ratify a new Constitution was unreasonable and an attempted breach of the existing 2015 Constitution.**

3. POSTPONED AGM JANUARY 2020

3.01 A LCF notice was sent to all members on 8th January 2020 (Appendix D) indicating that those wishing to stand for Office at the election scheduled for 29th January should apply before 22nd January. Geoff Sumnall duly responded on 15th January to stand for Chair. Geoff Sumnall had lived in Limehouse for 20 years and been a member of LCF since its early days, being closely involved in all its activities. His election manifesto pledged to make the LCF more representative of the Limehouse population and to make it more effective in addressing the many issues it faced.

3.02 On 15th January 2020 Chair Mark Slankard acknowledged Geoff Sumnall's application but stated that, amongst other objections, self nomination was not allowed and that 28 days notice was required. (Appendix E). A very strange response considering that Mark Slankard did not issue his call for candidates until 21 days before the election. **These statements are also untrue. There was no reference to self nomination or 28 days notice in the 2015**

Constitution which was in force at the time. (Appendix F). Geoff Sumnall replied on 15 th January that he believed his application to be valid and wished it to stand.

3.03 On 17 th January, Mark Slankard called a meeting of Officers and 4 other “Executives” to discuss the validity of Geoff Sumnall’s application. There were no minutes taken at this meeting but from witness accounts a decision could not be reached and the Digital Team Officer, Charlie Hughes, was asked to enquire of Geoff Sumnall if he could “find a way to avoid a divisive and potentially acrimonious election”. On questioning, Geoff Sumnall advised that for some time he had been unable to reach agreement with Mark Slankard on how the LCF should be run and wished his application as Chair to stand based on his manifesto. On reporting this, Charlie Hughes was requested, by Vice Chair Helen Kenny, to prepare an election process.

3.04 On 27 th January a further meeting, chaired by Mark Slankard, took place between the Officers and “Executives” to discuss the election process. From the witness account of Charlie Hughes, Mark Slankard stated he “would not be subjected to a debate with Geoff Sumnall and a contested vote at the imminent AGM”. **Mark Slankard further stated, “The 2015 Constitution would not allow a lawful election”. This statement is untrue, as the LCF had been using the same 2015 Constitution for Officer elections since 2015 (Appendix F).** To compound the deception, the use of the word “lawful” instead of “not consistent with the Constitution” suggested the election would not be legal. This is not true, LCF is unincorporated and therefore not subject to company law. However, on this basis a notice was given to LCF members on 28th January that the AGM and election scheduled for 29th January was cancelled.

3.05 Charlie Hughes, Digital Team Officer, was given the task of communicating to LCF members the decision to cancel the AGM and election. He resigned immediately afterwards in protest to the manner in which that decision came about. (Appendix G)

3.06 On 28 th January, a notice from “LCF Executive” was issued stating the AGM scheduled for the 29 th January was cancelled. (Appendix H) **The reason given was that the LCF “does not have a current ratified Constitution.” This statement is untrue, as this was the then current Constitution, approved by LBTH, as part of its designation of the LCF as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum.** The LCF notice also stated that an EGM was to be held 4 th March primarily to ratify a new Constitution, with the cancelled AGM to now be held to 8 th April.

3.07 With regard to the above notice on 28 th January, there is no reference to the term “LCF Executive” in the existing 2015 Constitution nor has there ever been any approval from LCF members as to who are, or what status is held by, members of the “LCF Executive”. It is of concern that Mark Slankard uses “Executives” to give support to decisions, as in the AGM cancellation above, and false credence to outgoing notices. **The use of the term “LCF Executive”, and to those given that status, is contrary to the 2015 Constitution.**

3.08 A meeting was still held by members on 29 th January at which a decision was voted on to write to the LCF Officers objecting to the AGM postponement and requesting the Officer elections take place at the scheduled EGM on 4 th March. An email stating this request was duly sent to LCF Officers on 9 th February on which 32 members agreed to have their names included in support. No response from the LCF Officers was received. **Not to respond to a letter of objection from so many concerned members is unreasonable behavior by the Chair and Officers and a dereliction of duties.**

4. EGM 4th MARCH 2020

4.01 On 13th February Mark Slankard sent an email to LCF members advising that an EGM was to be held on 4th March 2020 to ratify his proposed Constitution (Appendix I). His email referred to the postponed AGM and elections as being provisionally set for April once a “lawful Constitution” was ratified. **This statement therefore repeats the false claim that the existing 2015 Constitution was unlawful and advises that unless the new Constitution is ratified, members will be denied the choice of new Officers. Such a proposition is unreasonable, contrary to the 2015 Constitution, and dishonest.**

4.02 Further to the email sent to LCF Officers on 9th January on behalf of 32 named members, requesting Officer elections take place at the scheduled EGM on 4th March, a formal notice was sent to LCF Officers on 25th February in accordance with the 2015 Constitution, as follows:

George Korchinsky wrote:

Pursuant to Section 7.6 of the LCF Constitution, we provide notice that the following resolution is to be added to the agenda, to be voted on at the EGM:

“In accordance with Section 4.9 of the LCF Constitution, the following elections are to take place at this EGM:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary”

4.03 On 4th March, the day of the scheduled EGM, members arriving at the notified venue, The Barley Mow Veterans Club, were met by Vice Chair Helen Kenny. She informed members she was not aware of any meeting taking place and that she was only there to take votes on the proposed Constitution. Having experienced the abrupt cancellation of January’s scheduled AGM, the precaution had been taken by Catherine Gilson of booking the nearby Barley Mow Residents Room to enable the scheduled EGM to take place. Helen Kenny was invited to attend but she declined.

4.04 The 4th March EGM was then held with 32 members in attendance (Appendix J). Since there were no Officers present, a motion was put forward and seconded for George Korchinsky to be appointed as Chair for this meeting. It was agreed that there were 2 main items to be covered: the election of Chair and the acceptance of the proposed Constitution. **The first motion of the night was to declare the meeting as a bone fide LCF member meeting and it was passed unanimously.**

i) Chair Election: As Mark Slankard was the only candidate not present, the involvement of Geoff Sumnall was restricted. There was an open and lively debate and support for both candidates. Many members contributed with differing views, all covered in some detail in the minutes. (See Appendix J). When voting took place, the results were:

Geoff Sumnall – 29
Mark Slankard – 0
Abstentions – 1

ii) Proposed Constitution: There were concerns over how the Constitution issue was being covered and the delays it was causing. Since there were differing views on the proposed Constitution, the general feeling was that any vote on modifying and/or ratifying the proposed Constitution should be taken once the election of the new Chair was ratified. A motion was presented for a deferment and the results were:

In favour – 19

Against – 1

Abstentions – 12

5. NEW CONSTITUTION MARCH 2020

5.01 Paragraph 4.01 above deals with the notice sent out on 13th February for an EGM to be held on 4th March. Chapter 4 then deals with the meeting on 4th March which took place when the EGM was ignored on the day. Chapter 5 deals with the proposed Constitution which the scheduled EGM was meant to cover.

5.02 On 24th February a further notice of the 4th March EGM was sent from the LCF Officers to members to ratify the constitution. It also invited them to vote online for the proposed Constitution. **The notice to vote online was in contradiction to the existing 2015 Constitution which states, (Appendix F), that constitutional amendments could only be voted on by a show of hands.** No arrangements had been proposed and approved by members on how an online vote should take place and be scrutinised. In addition some LCF members do not have access to online voting. N.B. The restrictions on public meetings due to the Coronavirus pandemic did not come into force until 23rd March.

5.03 On the 12th March 2020 a notice from the “LCF Executive” was sent out with the Constitution voting results (Appendix K). **It states that ratification was held on 4th March** and an independent Adjudicator had verified the results and process. **This is a false statement as the EGM advertised for that purpose did not take place at all.** The 32 members, who attended the alternative meeting which was arranged on the night, voted for a deferment of the Constitution change until after the Chair election had been ratified. (see paragraph 4.04 ii).

5.04 The Adjudicator’s statement of 18th March 2020 provided no clarity on the key questions of:

- who was invited to vote,
- their eligibility to vote and
- what the process was for verifying that votes counted were from eligible members.

Therefore the outcome could not be relied upon. The Adjudicator’s report contained a statement that LCF Members had voted in December 2019 to hold an online vote on the new Constitution. This statement, which can only have originated from an LCF Officer , was untrue. (Appendix C)

6. AGM APRIL 2020

6.01 On 22nd March Mark Slankard sent members a 4-page email covering various notices from other organisations on the coronavirus pandemic. (Appendix L). At the end of the email was a notice entitled AMENDED SCHEDULE OF LCF EVENTS stating that due to the pandemic,

the election for Chair would now be entirely online. Registered eligible members would receive ballots before 1 April 2020. Candidates were to submit written statements by 31st March. No ballots were subsequently sent, and no online voting arrangements had been proposed and approved by members, prior to this notice. There was also no description of how the online vote would take place and be scrutinised. Some people, eligible to be members, do not have access to online voting. **This election process was unreasonable, poorly executed and produced many errors that call the result into question.**

6.02 On the 27th March the prospective Chair, Geoff Sumnall, commenced an exchange of emails with LCF Officers aimed at agreeing a fair and democratic election process (Appendix M). This may be summarised in one of his letters as, "I would wish this process to be on the basis of two requirements. That the details of those who are asked to vote are made known to us and verified beforehand; and that those who do vote, and for whom, are certified by an independent person."

6.03 During this exchange of emails concerns were raised by Geoff Sumnall's team to LCF Officers and the Adjudicator on:

- which members were contacted and validated prior to adjudication,
- why no independent Returning Officer was appointed,
- why LCF registration is a precondition of voting since this provision excluded some eligible voters unable to register for technical reasons,
- the serious design weaknesses in the voting mechanism and,
- the inadequate period given for voters to absorb candidates details, raise questions, understand the voting procedure and cast their vote.

CONCLUSION: The Chair election process was unfair, unsound and undemocratic. (Appendix N)

6.04 Geoff Sumnall and his support team requested access to the voting process, as the Adjudicator had suggested. This request was denied. **It is unreasonable for the incumbent's team to have the ability to witness and control the voting, outside adjudication, as this puts the election result in doubt. Not only must the process be fair, it must be seen to be fair.** Geoff Sumnall closed his emails, to LCF Officers on 7th April, requesting a fair election process with "Should you still feel unable to comply with this reasonable request, then my position is that I will continue not to accept this election process and I will raise the issue with LBTH".

7. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this Statement is that the LCF Officers, and its Chair Mark Slankard in particular, do not consistently act in the best interests of Limehouse. The specific evidence shows that during the periods considered, Mark Slankard, with Officer support, has acted unreasonably, without transparency, contrary to the LCF Constitution and dishonestly. We believe that this was done in order to secure his reelection and to maintain the status quo of his Officer Team.

Annex 3: Responses Received After Close of Consultation (5pm 27/01/21)

Reference	Respondent	Status	Comments
39	Individual Response (27/01/21)	Concerned	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this application. I appreciate the work that's gone into this application; however I am writing as an individual with some concerns.</p> <p>The neighbourhood designation area which form's the basis of the application does not reflect the wider Limehouse community. It focuses exclusively on the area south of commercial road, hence the application's claim that 73% of the neighbourhood is employed (1st in Tower Hamlets). North of Commercial Road there is a higher than average proportion of residents in Limehouse who are long term unemployed in a borough with the highest unemployment and poverty rates in London. In the context of the pandemic and the economic impact it brings the wider Limehouse area would benefit from a more representative designation area and subsequently a more representative group. It would be beneficial for the future of Limehouse to see meaningful relationships built across both sides of Commercial Road to pursue equitable and sustainable changes.</p>
40	Individual Response (27/01/21)	Negative	<p>I am writing to object to Limehouse Community Forum's proposed re-designation as a neighbourhood forum. I would like to raise with you my very grave concerns of un-democratic behaviour, lack of accountability, bad governance, and a closed, exclusive cabal of individuals led by Mark Slankard that actively discourages community cohesion, and has racist views.</p> <p>I am concerned by the complete lack of democratic process taking place in the LCF and complete lack of accountability. There may be collusion, conflict of interest and misappropriation of public funds.</p> <p>I was concerned when the 2019 AGM was cancelled with less than 24 hours notice with a spurious reason of the current constitution being deemed unlawful by Tower Hamlets Council. A misleading untruth as the current Constitution stands. An EGM was then planned by the committee, publicised on the LCF website and residents notified by email. Over 30 residents turned up for the meeting with many there to object to a draft constitution only to discover there To be no meeting and the Vice Chair denying all knowledge of a meeting. Without it there was no discussion, no accountability, no objections could be raised or discussed in a</p>

democratic manner. All democratic processes were removed. LCF gave the option of an online yes/no vote to pass a flawed constitution that handed complete power and control to the Chair - Mark Slankard. There was no forum for any amendment to be tabled. I would have put forward an amendment to limit the term of any one chair in power. The President of the United States has more checks and a limit on his term than the chair of LCF. This is un-democratic.

I am gravely concerned that these meetings being cancelled meant there was no democratic process and no accountability of LCF in 2019. And absolutely none during 2020. All governance disappeared in 2020. I feel residents have been stonewalled and all democratic processes abandoned. There is no transparency in the way LCF is run and anyone with a voice who raises concerns is silenced, ridiculed, side lined or removed from communication.

As a long standing and concerned resident, I have noticed a change in normal governance and operating procedures which are unexplained and nefarious. I want to bring this to your attention as the relevant local authority to either:

- A) investigate your own legal position as to your responsibilities regarding potential misappropriation of public funds within your jurisdiction or
- B) nominate a point of contact with whom the metropolitan police can liaise when and if an allegation of suspected Misuse of public funds is made in due course.

In my view, any democratic institution that permits autocracy is complicit.

Despite repeated requests for financial documents to show the governance of LCF, none have been shared in at least 5 years. Finances are not presented at AGMs nor are they published on the LCF website.

In addition to no finance records being shared we have a Chair who is constantly absent and spends more time in America than he does in Limehouse. His repeated absence brings into doubt his ability to be able to represent local residents with any knowledge or care, and I feel there is a complete conflict of interest with his local business. He represents local business not residents.

			<p>I object to their proposal saying the governance is correct and transparent. It is the opposite.</p> <p>I object to their proposal saying they promote community cohesion and inclusivity. The opposite is true. In planning Limefest one year I raised the issue that their proposed date fell during Ramadan and as we had not gone public with the date then we should change it. Mark Slankard ridiculed my suggestion saying 'if they had organised something on Christmas Day, they wouldn't change the date.' This blatant racism left me stunned and I withdrew from being involved. Someone with these views should not be given any power in Tower Hamlets. Tower Hamlets Council should not allow these racist views to continue. LCF has done nothing to address diversity in the ward. I live in a council block which is a richly diverse and friendly place. This diversity is not reflected in LCF. I was not made to feel welcome at all by the chair of LCF and was belittled if I raised any issue at meetings. Decision making is bullied and forced through and conducted out of meetings. It is outrageous the power the chair and committee has and their conduct is completely at odds with the friendly and inclusive nature of the community. For Tower Hamlets to support their proposal would be a damning vote of confidence to abuse of power, racism, community division and illegality.</p> <p>I hope you consider these points carefully and should you want me to elucidate any of them in more detail, I am happy to be contacted. I love Limehouse, I'm proud to live here and I feel part of a diverse and friendly community. It is sad that LCF is rotten to the core as it does not reflect us at all. I hope you will investigate it fully and hold its governing body to account. It should be disbanded not rewarded with a re-designation as a neighbourhood forum.</p>
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