

# Neighbourhood Forum toolkit

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# Neighbourhood Forum and Area Application Form

The Council has produced this form to assist community groups in applying to become a neighbourhood forum. Applicants do not have to use this form, although a separate neighbourhood forum application should contain similar information.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (5 & 8) 2012 sets out the information that must be included within a neighbourhood area and forum application. The information provided on this form will be published by the Council. However, personal information on members within the proposed forum as detailed in Section 4 will not be published.

## 1. Name of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum

.....

## 2. Name of the proposed Neighbourhood Area

.....

## 3. Primary contact details (these will be made publically available)

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Regulations 8, 9 and 10 requires details of at least one member of the proposed neighbourhood forum to be made public. Contact information provided in this section will be published.

Title	
First name	
Surname	
Address	
Postcode	
Phone	
e-mail	

## 4. List of the proposed forum members and what their interest is (i.e. resident, worker, councillor)

	Name	Resident or Business Address if worker please include the name of the company	Interest in area		
			Resident	Worker	Councillor
1					
2					

3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					

Note: Add more rows if required.

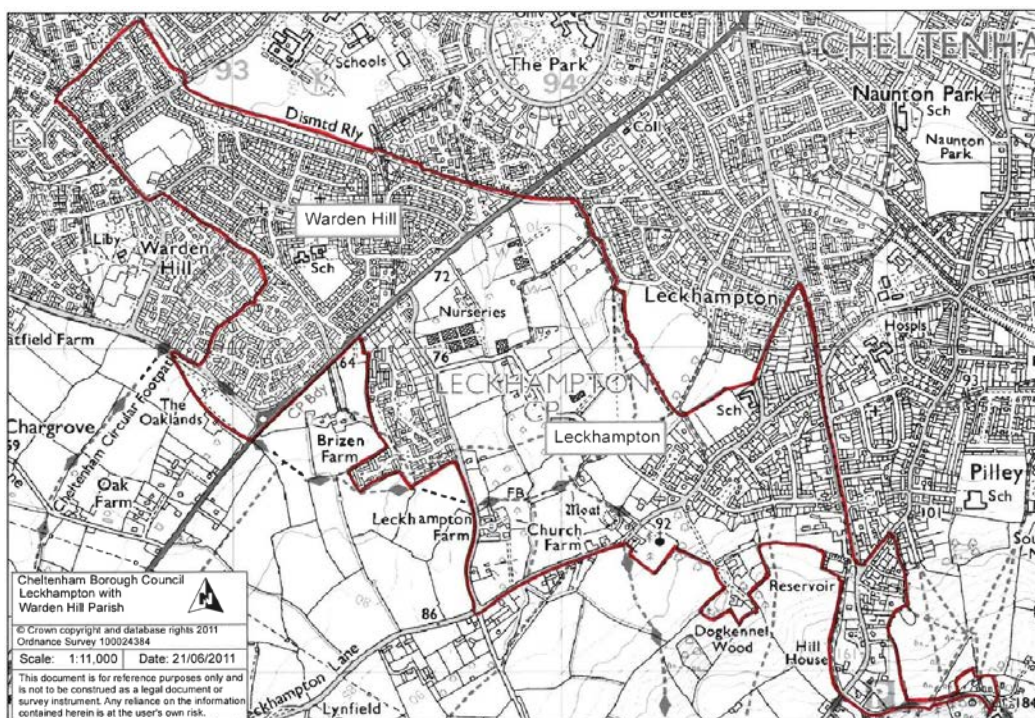
## 5. An OS map at an appropriate scale which clearly identifies the proposed Neighbourhood Area

Below is an example of a Neighbourhood Area map submitted as part of an application by Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council. Please contact the Planning Policy team if you require assistance in mapping your area.

## 6. A statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area

The following could be considerations when deciding the boundaries of a neighbourhood area:

- village or settlement boundaries, which could reflect areas of planned expansion



- the catchment area for walking to local services such as shops, primary schools, doctors' surgery, parks or other facilities
- the area where formal or informal networks of community based groups operate
- the physical appearance or characteristics of the neighbourhood, for example buildings may be of a consistent scale or style
- whether the area forms all or part of a coherent estate either for businesses or residents
- whether the area is wholly or predominantly a business area
- whether infrastructure or physical features define a natural boundary, for example a major road or railway line or waterway
- the natural setting or features in an area
- size of the population (living and working) in the area

Electoral ward boundaries should be used as a starting point for discussions on the appropriate size of a neighbourhood area. Make sure to engage with the relevant ward Councillors at an early stage.

## 7. A statement which explains how the proposed Neighbourhood Forum meets the conditions contained in Section 61F(5), Schedule 9 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

The Council must be satisfied that the forum meets the following conditions—

- (a) it is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned (whether or not it is also established for the express purpose of promoting the carrying on of trades, professions or other businesses in such an area),
- (b) its membership is open to—
  - (i) individuals who live in the neighbourhood area concerned,
  - (ii) individuals who work there (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise), and
  - (iii) individuals who are elected members of a county council or district council whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned,
- (c) its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom—
  - (i) lives in the neighbourhood area concerned,
  - (ii) works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise), or
  - (iii) is an elected member of a county council or district council whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned,
- (d) it has a written constitution

## **8. A brief statement setting out the main intention for establishing the Neighbourhood Forum**

For example Neighbourhood Development Plan, Neighbourhood Development Order, Community Right to Build.

## **9. A copy of the written constitution for the proposed Neighbourhood Forum**

The following constitution template may be used as a starting point for a potential Neighbourhood Forum.

# Neighbourhood Forum Constitution Template

## ***Insert Name* Neighbourhood Forum Constitution**

### **Name**

The name of the Forum shall be the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Forum (the Forum).

### **Area of Benefit**

The area in which the Forum will pursue its objects is the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Area, which is the area designated by *Insert Name* Council for which the Forum will produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Objects**

The purpose of the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Forum is

- To prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the *Insert Name* area;
- To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the *Insert Name* area\*;
- Any other appropriate purpose agreed by the Forum.

*\* Note - This wording is contained in the Act and has to be used in the constitution. In some instances, the Forum could also have the purpose of promoting the carrying on of trades, professions or other businesses in the area. The purpose should reflect the character of the neighbourhood area.*

### **Powers**

In furtherance of its objects the *Insert Name* Forum may

- Invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Forum, and to open a bank account to manage such funds;
- Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars etc.;
- Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations;
- Employ staff and volunteers as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the objects of the Forum;
- Take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objects of the Forum, including taking out any contracts which it may see fit.

*Note – The above are indicative of the powers which the Forum may employ. It may be considered appropriate to delegate some of these powers to a Management Committee, whose membership would need to be defined in this constitution. It may be advisable to exclude certain categories of Forum members from employment by the Forum (i.e. management committee members).*

### **Membership**

The *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Forum will comprise at least 21 individuals who live or work in the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Area or who are elected members of a county council or district council whose area falls within the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Area.

Membership is open to individuals who live or work in the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Area. It is also open to individuals who are elected members of a county council or district council area falls within the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Area.

Membership shall be drawn from different parts of the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Area and different sections of the community in the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Area.

Members shall be accepted by the Forum; resignations from membership shall be received by the Forum.

*Notes – Membership of a neighbourhood forum is set out in the Localism Act 2011. You can adjust the wording to reflect the type of local government area (delete whichever does not apply in county, district, London councils). You should also include procedures for replacement of members where necessary, bearing in mind that the forum must have a minimum of 21 members and its membership must reflect the diversity, character and inclusivity of the area. It may be advisable to include a definition of “individuals who work in the area” to ensure that membership is only available to persons with a genuine long term business interest in the area.*

## **Working Arrangements**

*Notes - Details of how the neighbourhood forum operates are not set out in the Act, but should be set out in the constitution and this could include:*

- *details of how decisions will be made, including who will be entitled to vote in the making of decisions;*
- *details of how decisions will be recorded and how minutes of meetings will be approved;*
- *details of governance, including official positions (e.g. chair, treasurer, secretary), procedures for election to positions, the means and duration of the notice given regarding elections to positions, size of quorum, etc.*
- *the composition of any management committee, working groups, or sub-groups, a definition of their roles, and the procedure for appointment or election to such groups;*
- *a statement of the powers to be delegated to the management committee, working groups, and sub-groups;*
- *the frequency and pattern of meetings including annual general meetings, management committee and other sub-group meetings (e.g. the forum will meet monthly);*
- *the procedure for calling an extraordinary general meeting;*
- *the arrangements for financial management (e.g. who has access to the bank account, how payments are made, how are expenses dealt with, etc.);*
- *details of how declarations of interest and potential conflicts of interest will be recorded and managed (e.g. conflicts of interest could include where neighbourhood plan policy would affect the business interests of a forum member).*

It may be advisable to devote a section of the constitution to each of the above categories.

## **Alteration to the Constitution**

The procedure for altering or amending the constitution.

*Note – Alterations to the constitution should be made by meetings of the full Forum, rather than by a sub-committee.*

## **Duration**

The duration of the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Forum is 5 years from *Insert neighbourhood forum designation date*.

The procedure for dissolving the *Insert Name* Neighbourhood Forum, in the event that it is no longer required.

*Notes – The Act sets out the 5 year life of a forum from the designation date. It could continue in a different guise after this time, but it would cease to be the neighbourhood planning body.*



# How to set up a neighbourhood forum

Putting the pieces together



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# 1 Introduction

This resource will explain:

- How to set up a neighbourhood forum including
  - involving 21 people
  - ensuring membership is representative of your [neighbourhood area](#)
  - putting together a written constitution
- How to formally apply for designation of your neighbourhood forum
- How your application will be determined by the local planning authority

If you are new to neighbourhood planning you are encouraged to read the [Locality Roadmap](#) which explains the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan, including neighbourhood forum designation. It will provide useful context to this resource which focuses on the 'how'.

## 2 What is a neighbourhood forum?

A neighbourhood forum is the body that leads on the production of a neighbourhood plan in neighbourhood areas that are not covered (either in part or in whole) by a town or parish council. A neighbourhood forum must meet certain [legal requirements](#) and can only be designated by your local planning authority. Only one neighbourhood forum can be designated for a neighbourhood area.

## 3 How do you set up a neighbourhood forum?

Before applying to your local planning authority to be designated as the neighbourhood forum for the neighbourhood area that you want to plan for, you will need to set up a neighbourhood forum that meets the legal requirements. This can be done at the [same time](#) as deciding on the [neighbourhood area](#) you want to plan for. You are encouraged to read this document in conjunction with our [How to designate a neighbourhood area](#) resource.

### 3.1 Involving at least 21 people

The first step is getting the community involved as you need a minimum of 21 people to join your prospective neighbourhood forum. To help spark interest and grow your membership you can:

- **Publicise your intentions.** This is recommended as the first action, as [raising the profile](#) of your proposed neighbourhood plan will encourage people who have a genuine interest in getting involved to come forward. You can use a variety of different methods including producing and distributing leaflets, word of mouth and social media (for example Twitter and Facebook). You can raise the profile of your proposed neighbourhood plan as you develop your thinking around the extent of your neighbourhood area.



- **Hold engagement events.** These are another good way of raising the profile of your prospective forum and to explain to people what neighbourhood planning is and how they can get involved. These can be in the form of workshops, drop-in sessions or by attending other community events that are going on in your area. **Sign up sheets** should be made available at all of your engagement events. This enables you to start gathering the contact details of those who may wish to join your prospective forum. Keep them simple. You can follow up with a survey to gather more detailed information such as where respondents live, their age, ethnicity etc. which can be used at the next stage: assessing whether your prospective neighbourhood forum is representative of the area.
- **Be open** with people, explaining why they should consider joining your neighbourhood forum, the benefits of doing so and their likely time commitments. If people know what is involved from the start it increases the likelihood of them maintaining their membership.
- **Keep growing** your membership and don't simply stop at the minimum figure of 21 people. You should always be looking to keep membership open and growing and be seeking to recruit members from backgrounds, age groups or ethnicities which may be under represented.
- **Approach those who might have the skills you need** [How to resource your neighbourhood plan](#) provides further information on the skills that may be required to deliver a neighbourhood plan.

### 3.2 Ensuring membership is representative

The membership of your neighbourhood forum must be open to all those who live, work and carry out business within your neighbourhood area, as well as elected members whose ward is within (either in whole or part) your neighbourhood area. In practice this means that while you do not need to secure membership from all of these [categories](#) you should demonstrate that you have made every effort to secure membership from each as well as from different geographical areas and sections of the community. In order to ensure your membership is as broadly representative as possible you should consider the following approaches:

- **Understanding the demographic profile of your neighbourhood:** It is a good idea to try to understand the age mix, ethnicity, gender split and proportion of residents to workers within your neighbourhood and seek to reflect this within your membership. You may wish to look at census data for relevant statistics. You are also advised to speak to your local planning authority as it may be able to provide you with information and advice. Knowledge of the demographic profile of the area will enable you to set targets in terms of membership; for example, you may identify the percentage of members for particular age groups or ethnicities. This approach was adopted by the Bookham Neighbourhood Forum who set their own [target criteria for membership](#) based on census and other publicly accessible data.
- **A mixture of income backgrounds** within your membership will also help to ensure your neighbourhood forum is representative. For example, having a forum that is made up of just professionals is unlikely to be representative of your neighbourhood area. Similarly, you should also seek to include both home and non-home owners.



- **A wide geographic spread** of forum members from across the neighbourhood area that you want to plan for will be required, rather than having a membership that is drawn from a small cluster such as a single street. Get a map of your neighbourhood area and start plotting out the addresses (residents) and places of work (businesses and employees) of your members. This will help you to see where the gaps are and target potential members in the areas that are under-represented. This can be achieved through a leaflet campaign, canvassing people on the street or at events in those areas.
- **Engage with businesses:** They may provide a different perspective from residents and provide useful advice and intelligence in terms of where planning restrictions may need to be relaxed or tightened (such as changes of use of shops, pubs or offices). They may also have specific skills and resources which you may wish to draw on as you develop your plan (see [How to resource your neighbourhood plan](#)). This can also offer an effective way to engage with their employees and raise the profile of the neighbourhood plan more widely.

Urban Vision Enterprises has produced a set of [diversity cards](#) as a prompt for groups wishing to establish themselves as a neighbourhood forum. It is a good starting point to help you think about how inclusive and representative your neighbourhood forum is.

Having established your forum, if you think there are still groups that are under-represented, such as young people, you should make efforts to continually grow your membership to rectify this. It is important to remember that although it may not be possible to be completely representative, you do need to be able to demonstrate that you have made every effort to ensure that membership is a fair reflection of your area or you risk having your application for designation refused.

### 3.3 Putting together a written constitution

Each neighbourhood forum must have a written constitution. This should contain the key agreements made by members as to how the organisation will work. It should be clearly written so members can understand their rights and responsibilities; leaders can understand their mandate and accountability; and members of the public understand why the organisation exists and how it operates.

There are a number of national bodies who provide advice on this including Locality, NCVO (the National Council of Voluntary Organisations) and Community Matters (a national membership and support organisation for the community sector).

Locality has produced a [template constitution](#) as a starting point for prospective forums that groups may find helpful. [NCVO](#) also offer [practical guidance](#) and support on governance arrangements including [how to write a constitution](#). The [Community Matters website](#) also has information on setting up a community group as well as online advice and guidance on a range of issues including model constitutions.

Preparing a written constitution should not be seen as a tick box exercise but as a **way to guide decision making** within your forum. The written constitution will set down how



members will make decisions; whether on planning issues, processes for spending money or how to consult and engage on the plan.

The above links will assist in understanding what constitutions are and how to put one together. The advice below is about how to tailor a constitution specifically for a neighbourhood forum. There is a lot of scope in terms of **what you can include** within your constitution. The level of detail will depend on your existing working relationships and group dynamics. If you are an existing organisation, for example a tenants association, you may be able to adapt an existing constitution, however, you need to consider carefully how decisions will be made if you do not agree. If you are new to working together you may need to give more time and consideration to how decisions will be made.

### 3.4 What to include within your constitution.

Working through the following list will help you develop a constitution that meets your forum's individual needs:

- Include the **name of your proposed neighbourhood forum**.
- The **purpose of your forum** should be stated. Legally any forum must be set up for the *"express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned"*. In addition to this you may wish to include some overarching objectives such as what you as a forum are hoping to achieve through neighbourhood planning.
- Include details of **who can become a member** (the legislation requires that membership is open to those who live, work and carry out business within your neighbourhood, including elected members) and what is expected of any members (for example attendance at meetings). Some groups have different **membership options** such as 'affiliate' membership (with no voting rights) or options for organisations (as opposed to just individuals) to be members. If you decide to have different options make sure you explain the differences.
- **Governance arrangements** such as official positions should also be detailed. These do vary between forums with some opting for a hierarchical approach (appointing a Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer) whereas other groups have preferred a more 'collaborative' approach and have appointed a 'convenor' rather than a Chair. Any appointments to positions will need to be voted in at the forum's first Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- **Working arrangements** within your forum can also be included. Many groups set up steering and working groups (see [How to make effective decisions](#) and see [How to share the workload](#)) to oversee and undertake the work. Clearly set out the function of these sub groups, how they relate to one another and how to join them. Some neighbourhood forums co-opt members into their sub groups; others request applications to be submitted outlining why members wish to be involved and what they have to offer. The decision on appointments is then put to a vote at the AGM. You should settle on working arrangements that support your group whilst allowing for some flexibility as these may need to change as the plan progresses.





- Include details of **meeting patterns and how decisions will be made**. Ensure that meetings are open to members of the public, details are published in advance and minutes are made available on your website. This will help to ensure transparency in your decision making processes. Detailed questions you may want to answer in your written constitution include; how will decisions be made - will it be a majority rules approach or will the Chair have the casting vote? How will the AGM be convened and any Extraordinary General Meeting if interim decisions are required? How often will your sub groups meet? Who will they report to and when? Again, allow for some flexibility as meeting patterns may change as the plan progresses. You should also consider including details of how you will inform the wider community of decisions.
- **Financial management** arrangements should also be included. This often involves appointing a Treasurer who will be responsible for opening the group's bank account and managing the finances. You also need to decide who will be signatories for the bank account. It is good practice to ensure that financial management arrangements are transparent with details of income and expenditure published and regularly reported at meetings.
- Setting out how potential **conflicts of interest** will be identified, recorded and managed will also be useful. A conflict of interest is a set of circumstances that creates a risk that an individual's judgement or actions regarding a primary interest (neighbourhood plan) may be unduly influenced by a secondary interest (for example, land ownership). In practice this may simply mean that in some situations certain members may have to abstain from voting if it is considered there is a conflict of interest. Look at how others have dealt with this within their constitutions or seek advice from your local planning authority as it will have its own processes in place or could advise on how similar organisations have addressed this issue.
- **Speak to your local planning authority** as it may be able to offer you some practical advice as well as directing you to examples of what other groups have done. But be careful when looking at the constitutions of other groups as they may not be the ideal solution for your particular group and way of working.

It is strongly advised that you agree your constitution and make internal appointments at your first AGM. Ideally the first meeting should be held prior to formally applying to the local planning authority for designation (see below). Many groups have found the process of putting together a written constitution and arranging the initial AGM extremely beneficial as it has required them to work closely together, provided a focus and helped in developing strong working relationships.

Always bear in mind that you cannot plan for every eventuality and that, if required, the constitution can be amended at a later date and changes voted through at your next AGM (or if this is too far away an Extraordinary AGM).



## 4 How to formally apply to be designated as a neighbourhood forum

Once you have set up your neighbourhood forum and are confident that it meets the legal requirements, the next stage is to formally apply to your local planning authority for designation. If you are applying for your neighbourhood area to be designated at the same time, then this section should be read in conjunction with our resource on [neighbourhood area designation](#). It should be noted that a neighbourhood forum is designated as the neighbourhood forum for a particular neighbourhood area. It cannot be designated [in advance](#) of the neighbourhood area.

### 4.1 Speak to your local planning authority

Give your local planning authority advance notice of your intention to submit an application to be designated as a neighbourhood forum. If possible agree the submission with your authority in terms of content and how much detail they are expecting to see. It will also be able to advise how they would like the application submitted.

### 4.2 Make an application

If your neighbourhood area (that relates to your forum application) covers the administrative boundary of more than one local planning authority an application will need to be submitted to each authority. Although the preferred method of submission may vary between local planning authorities every neighbourhood forum application must include the following:

- the name of the proposed neighbourhood forum
- a written constitution for the proposed neighbourhood forum
- the name of the neighbourhood area to which the forum relates and a map identifying that area
- contact details of at least one member of the proposed neighbourhood forum
- a statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the [legal requirements](#)

## 5 How will the local planning authority consider and determine your application?

Once your application has been submitted to your local planning authority, the authority will first check that it has all the information required. It will then publicise your application and invite representations from the wider public and those with an interest in the area for a minimum of six weeks. It then considers and determines your application.





You should ask your local planning authority to identify a key point of contact (this is likely to be an officer within the planning policy team) with whom you should liaise and programme in regular catch up discussions to:

- discuss any consultation responses either objecting to your application or seeking clarification
- ensure that the decision making timetable is progressing
- see if the local planning authority requires any further information.

## 5.1 What will they consider?

The local planning authority will consider whether or not your forum meets the [legal tests](#) which in practical terms means:

- whether the forum has been set up for the express purpose of promoting or improving the environmental, economic and social wellbeing of your neighbourhood area
- whether membership is open to all those who live, work and carry out business within your neighbourhood area as well as elected members
- whether membership includes a minimum of 21 people who either live, work or carry out business within the neighbourhood area as well as elected members.

In addition to the above tests your local planning authority is required to consider whether or not you have made reasonable attempts to secure membership from the [specified categories](#) as well as from different places and from different sections of the community.

The majority of applications to be designated as a neighbourhood forum are being approved by local planning authorities. However, where this has not been the case, reasons have centred around concerns over the representativeness of the prospective forum; both geographically and demographically.

Local planning authorities can withdraw an organisation or body's designation as a neighbourhood forum if they consider it is no longer meeting the legal requirements. For example when considering Northenden's forum application [Manchester City Council](#) proposed to include a requirement to review the forum designation in 2016 to "take account of the efforts made by the Neighbourhood Forum to expand its membership to include members aged under 25".

It is important to remember that designation should not be the end of the process. You should continue to seek new members and in particular those from areas and cross sections of the population under-represented, particularly when members leave.

Neighbourhood forum designations only last for five years so you may have to reapply for designation if you want to maintain your forum beyond this.

## 5.2 How will they make the decision?

This will vary from local planning authority to local planning authority and it is therefore important to ask them how decisions are made on neighbourhood forum applications. Some local planning authorities use their powers of delegation to authorise planning officers to make



the decision. Other local planning authorities will only allow decisions to be made by their elected councillors (with a recommendation from a planning officer). If this is the case ask your local planning authority which of its committees will determine the application and when.

Committees may only meet periodically, and not all authorities will allow applicants to speak in support of their application during the meeting. You are encouraged to check this with your local planning authority.

## 6 Conclusions

Seeking designation as a neighbourhood forum need not be complicated and it is achievable. A lot of the work that goes into setting up your forum will stand you in good stead for plan production. It will help you to agree constructive working practices as well as having a forum that is representative of your neighbourhood.

The Highgate Neighbourhood Forum, whose neighbourhood area falls within the administrative area of two local planning authorities within London, has provided a useful [explanation](#) of how it went about setting up its forum.

### Contact:

Planning Aid England  
Royal Town Planning Institute  
41 Botolph Lane  
London EC3R 8DL  
Tel. 020 3206 1880  
E-mail: [info@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:info@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

For further information please visit [rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid](http://rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid)

Registered Charity Number: 262865

Scottish Registered Charity Number: SC 037841



# Establishing a neighbourhood forum

Creating the right constitution for your community

Lorraine Hart, Community Land Use

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# Introduction

Neighbourhood planning, one of the Government's key reforms from 2011's Localism Act, has proved popular with communities. At the time of writing, over 80 successful neighbourhood planning referendums have been held, and a further 1,500 forums and parish councils have been given the green light to begin their neighbourhood planning journey. Not only are neighbourhood plans popular, they are important, because they are used by local planning authorities to guide decisions about planning permission and investment in neighbourhood plan areas.

This resource is designed to help groups or individuals who want to establish a neighbourhood forum and to develop a suitable constitution. It looks in some detail at the issues to be considered when agreeing a constitution, as well as the importance of record keeping, to help ensure that designation of the forum by the local planning authority is as straightforward as possible.

When plans are in areas with a parish or town council, there is no need to establish a neighbourhood forum. Town or parish Councils lead the neighbourhood planning process in these areas though many have set up wider groups as advisory bodies to help develop their neighbourhood plan.

In areas where there is no parish or town Council, a neighbourhood forum has to be established. This must meet legislative requirements and the 2012 neighbourhood plan regulations so that it can be designated by the local planning authority as the qualifying body to produce a neighbourhood plan for its area. The process of establishing the forum can be led by a community group, business or group of individuals. In some cases the constitution of an existing community group can be used.

Basic requirements of forming a neighbourhood forum:

- [Established for] the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned
- A purpose that reflects the character of the area in general terms
- Membership open to people living and working in the area, and elected members for the area (reasonable steps must be taken to secure at least one of each)
- A minimum of 21 members from above groups
- Membership drawn from different places in the area and different sections of the community.

A prospective neighbourhood forum is not required to have a member from each membership category in order to be designated. It must have an open membership policy, but it cannot force people to be a part of something they may not wish to be a part of. The local planning authority must consider whether the prospective neighbourhood forum has secured or taken reasonable steps to attempt to secure membership from each category and from different places and sections of the community in that area.

All of this is not difficult, but each neighbourhood planning area is different. Ensuring that the processes of a forum are clear - through the agreement of a constitution for the forum - may require some discussion about how to balance interests and views and still include as many people and organisations as possible.

You can find guidance here on how to establish a forum, and learn how it can assist with enabling the neighbourhood plan to be informed and shaped by all interests and constructive working relationships from the outset. An important element is to talk to the local planning authority early in the process.

## Important links between the neighbourhood area and neighbourhood forum

### forum membership eligibility

The neighbourhood area is the area in which neighbourhood planning policies will be developed by any forum agreed as the qualifying body by the local planning authority.

An application to the local planning authority to agree the boundary of a neighbourhood area can be made at the same time as the application for a forum to be designated as the qualifying body. But they can also be done separately.

This is important because the neighbourhood area, in addition to being the area in which neighbourhood plan policies will be applied, is also the area from which neighbourhood forum members must be drawn. As a result the neighbourhood area map must be attached to the forum constitution in order to provide clarity on whether individuals and organisations (including businesses) are eligible for membership of the forum.

Even if an applicant is only applying to designate a neighbourhood area, the process requires confirmation that the applicant is capable of becoming a qualifying body in terms of its membership and its objectives.

## The Referendum on the neighbourhood plan

The other important link between a neighbourhood plan and a forum is that when all stages of a neighbourhood plan have been completed, and potentially amended as a result of an independent examination, a referendum must be passed in order for the neighbourhood plan to come into force.

The neighbourhood area defines the area from which residents who have registered to vote can be drawn to participate in the final referendum, so gaining their active support for the forum's work is a good way to ensure a positive referendum result. The examiner may also recommend that the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area, for example where the scale or nature of the proposals in the draft neighbourhood plan or Order are such that they will have a substantial, direct and demonstrable impact beyond the neighbourhood area.

It's worth remembering that the final neighbourhood plan referendum will also be influenced by whether an area is agreed by the local planning authority as a 'business area'. If it is, the plan will be subject to two referendums and both must agree on the neighbourhood plan for it to be brought into force. If the two referendums do not agree then it will be up the Local planning authority to decide whether the plan can be brought into force. The referendums will be:

- One for residents who are registered to vote in the neighbourhood area that the neighbourhood plan covers My Community bullet list
- One for businesses who pay Non Domestic Rates (business rates) in the neighbourhood plan area.



## When a neighbourhood area is designated as a business area

**A local planning authority can designate a neighbourhood area as a business area:**

- With the agreement of the neighbourhood forum before an application is made to designate the forum and neighbourhood area or
- When they make a decision on the designation, after they have conducted their own six week consultation on the application required by the legislation and regulations.

A neighbourhood plan area can only be agreed as a business area when the neighbourhood area is considered to be ‘wholly or predominantly used for business’. So if a proposed neighbourhood area includes an area that is largely town centre, industrial estate or business park, it is possible that the Local planning authority will designate it as a business area.

To ensure that this is addressed before an application for an area and forum is made, it is sensible to check with the Local planning authority early on that it does not regard the area as wholly or predominantly used for business.

If it does, consultation on the neighbourhood plan area before the designation application is made, should specifically include businesses. In addition, businesses should be represented among the 21 members of the forum needed to make an eligible application to the Local planning authority for forum designation.

It also has implications for the constitution of a forum, its membership, its commitment to inclusion, its affiliations and the ways it deals with conflicts of interest.

**Engaging with businesses at this early stage is therefore important. It can include activities such as:**

- Gathering business contacts in the area from the local authority, local chamber of commerce and other forum members
- Making face to face contact by visiting business premises in the area
- Asking businesses to support the process of consultation on the area by providing help with venues/catering for meetings, help with printing costs etc.
- Ensuring that any publicity on the neighbourhood plan includes the potential effects on businesses in the area
- Holding specific events aimed at businesses in the proposed neighbourhood area.

**The following checklist is to enable a group of individuals, a business or a community group to consider:**

1. Which clauses they wish to include in their constitution
2. What specific issues may need to be considered under each clause
3. Suggested additions based on forum constitutions that have already been through the application process.

The checklist highlights the specific points that are relevant to the work of a forum and assumes that the forum will not be a company regulated by company legislation. It also takes into consideration the voluntary nature of many neighbourhood forums which are mainly reliant on volunteers and have limited resources. These factors affect many practical administrative and other issues around the running of the forum which are governed by its constitution, such as:

- Timing - notice given for meetings
- Planning - aligning key decisions in the neighbourhood planning process with forum meetings to ensure accountability to forum members and allow the work of the forum to highlight the involvement of the wider community

- Available time and resources - for administration of membership, meetings and communications
- Conflict Resolution - Having clear guidance in the constitution can help to ensure that a forum's work is not delayed or rendered ineffective by disputes between members and that all meetings are respectful and constructive.

When creating your own constitution it can be very helpful to consider the constitutions of forums that have already been agreed by Local Planning Authorities. This can save time and duplication of effort and help to create a constitution for your forum that reflects local views about governance of the forum, the existence of other organisations locally and the nature of your neighbourhood plan area. A range of examples can be found here [www.mycommunity.org.uk](http://www.mycommunity.org.uk).

## Examples of neighbourhood forum constitutions agreed by Local Planning Authorities

### Business area forum constitutions

- [Altrincham Town Centre business neighbourhood forum](#)
- [Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council](#)
- [South Bank and Waterloo neighbourhood forum](#) (Cross-boundaries)
- [London Boroughs of Southwark](#) and [Lambeth](#)
- [Liverpool Innovation Park business neighbourhood forum](#) - [Liverpool City Council](#)

### Non-business area forum constitutions

- [Central Ealing neighbourhood forum](#)
- [London Borough of Ealing](#)
- [Marton West neighbourhood plan forum](#)
- [Middlesbrough District Council](#)

- [Norland neighbourhood forum](#)
- [Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea](#)
- [Unity in Our Community neighbourhood planning forum \(Leasowe\)](#)
- [Wirral Borough Council](#)
- [Shoreham Beach neighbourhood forum](#)
- [Arun-Worthing District Council](#)

## Constitution check list

Neighbourhood Forum Constitution check list				
Possible constitution clause	Purpose of the clause(s)	Why?	Issues to consider	Potential clauses to add/include
<b>Name of the forum</b>	To ensure that the name of the forum is clear.	A name for the forum is required by the <a href="#">Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012</a>	Whether other groups with the word forum in their name exist in the neighbourhood area already and may cause confusion.	Add 'neighbourhood plan' into the forum name or exclude the word 'forum'

<b>Neighbourhood area</b>	To define the area for which the neighbourhood plan will be produced and from where members can be drawn.	To set out eligibility to join the forum and provide clarity about the area that the neighbourhood plan policies and proposals will cover.	Members may wish to check their own eligibility or the eligibility of other members. It is also important to have these eligibility requirements easily accessible so that potential members' eligibility can be easily checked in whatever process is adopted in the constitution.	Ensure that the neighbourhood area map is included in the constitution and on the membership form.
<b>Objectives of the forum</b>	To be clear about the purpose of the forum and its activities.	Section 61F(5) (a) of <a href="#">Town and Country Planning Act (1990)</a> states that forums must be established to promote the social economic and	Whether the forum is likely to want to continue in some form beyond the five years that the legislation sets out as the lifespan of a forum once it has been	In addition to the requirement to promote social, economic and environmental well-being the following could be added:

		<p>environmental well-being of the neighbourhood plan area.</p> <p>Other objectives can be included but this objective must be.</p>	<p>agreed by the Local planning authority. See 'Alteration of the constitution' clause below.</p>	<p>To produce a neighbourhood plan</p> <p>To provide opportunities to influence local decision making/ promote citizenship</p> <p>Encourage openness and transparency between all organisations about the services and plans for the area</p> <p>To promote community cohesion.</p>
<b>Inclusion/Equalities Statement</b>	To commit members to acting legally in relation to preventing	To ensure that forums are bound by their constitution to act legally.	Although there are legal requirements to prevent discrimination, many forums have also used this clause to publicly	Clauses related to membership that commit the forum to disregard age, sex and so on.

	discrimination against specific groups.		declare their commitment to doing so. They may also add a commitment to seek out the views of those in the community who may be harder to reach.	Clauses related to the way the forum will work - inclusively, maximising local input etc.
<b>Affiliations</b>	To outline any official connections (membership or other endorsements to other organisations) or rule out such connections.	To state publicly their independence or connections to other organisations.	Some forums want to be clear that they are not connected to any organisations in their area that are religious or political since that suggests that they may have a particular view on some issues.	A statement that rules out affiliations to political, religious or other organisations.
<b>Powers of the forum</b>	To set out the powers that the forum needs to	To inform forum members of the powers the forum	Whether all the activities of a forum are	Powers to work with consultants, conduct research, hold seminars

	<p>carry out its activities and meet its objectives.</p>	<p>can exercise, so that it can be held to account.</p>	<p>to be carried out by forum members.</p> <p>What activities are likely to be needed to enable a forum to meet its objectives including how it spends money and how decisions are made about this.</p>	<p>and training, cooperate with others, exchange information, employ staff and take any other legal actions that are necessary to achieve the forum's objectives.</p>
<p><b>Membership of the forum</b></p>	<p>To be clear about who can join the forum and how they can become members.</p>	<p>Section 61F(5) (b) of the <a href="#">Town and Country Planning Act (1990)</a> states that membership of a forum must be open to individuals who live or work in the neighbourhood area and individuals who are elected members</p>	<p>Whether individuals can join under more than one category of membership.</p> <p>Whether individuals who live or work outside the neighbourhood area and are not elected members of a Council for the area should also</p>	<p>Acceptable methods by which individuals can apply for membership e.g. printed form or electronically-</p> <p>How membership eligibility is verified (particularly for community organisations and individuals who work</p>



		<p>of a county council, district council or London borough</p>	<p>be members so that they can influence the work of the forum.</p> <p>Whether an age limit should be set for membership.</p> <p>Whether Associate membership could be offered instead to those outside an age limit or the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>Selection arrangements for representatives from community groups and businesses.</p> <p>Whether community organisations or</p>	<p>in the neighbourhood area)</p> <p>Process for agreeing members and any right of appeal for refusals.</p> <p>Clarify membership categories and any associated conditions.</p> <p>‘Associate membership’ category that could have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No voting rights at any forum meeting</li> <li>- whose attendance at any forum meeting does not count towards a quorum for the meeting</li> <li>- No right to stand for Committee/Officer roles but can participate in the</li> </ul>
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			<p>businesses should have more than one named individual as a member to represent them at forum meetings so they can arrange substitutes to attend.</p> <p>Whether membership of the forum will remain open for a fixed period of time or whether, when the forum membership reaches a specific number, it will be closed.</p> <p>Whether community groups need to be located in the neighbourhood area in</p>	<p>forums work and discussions so their views can be heard.</p> <p>Community group membership conditions that require that they deliver services in or are located in the neighbourhood area</p> <p>Arrangements for resignation of membership or its termination/suspension and any appeal process.</p>
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			order to be eligible for membership.	
<b>Decision Making/Voting Rights</b>	To set out who can vote, by what method, how votes are counted and how decisions voted upon are made or 'carried'.	Some voting methods require more organisation and administration than others.  Clarity for members on what happens if votes are tied.	Whether proxy votes can be used.  Whether all members have voting rights.  Whether the Chair should have a casting or second vote in the event of a tied vote	Make clear when votes will be held on some issues if necessary.
<b>Conflicts of interest</b>	To set out how conflicts of interest will be managed.	Conflicts of interest can damage a forum's reputation and local trust and confidence in its work.	How business interests are to be considered (landowners or those who have a financial interest in the final plan).	These can be dealt with under membership eligibility or via a specific clause on declarations of interest and how they affect voting rights and participation in meetings.

		It can also delay the work of the forum and discourage applications for membership.		
<b>Conflict Resolution</b>	To set out a process by which conflicts can be resolved.	Prevent delay in the conduct of the forum's work.	If a neighbourhood plan area is a business area and includes businesses that are also developers of own land in the area.	A simple process that includes who will make a final decision about any dispute.
<b>Management Committee of the forum (this can also be called The Executive Committee, the Steering group etc.)</b>	To set out arrangements under which the management committee can operate.	Between meetings of all forum members (General Meetings), the Committee keeps the forum's work going, makes decisions to present to forum	Whether forum members in all membership categories may stand as committee members  Maximum and minimum numbers that can be elected.	Who can stand for election to officer and committee roles?  Set achievable maximum and minimum numbers for the Committee.

		General Meetings and Annual General Meetings and ensures that all work done is within the limits of the constitution.	Whether co-options to the committee of individuals from other organisations are possible.	
<b>Management Committee Officers</b>	To set out the officer roles and responsibilities needed by the forum	To ensure that the Management Committee acts within the constitution and can be held to account by the wider forum membership and external stakeholders.	<p>Given that most forum members are volunteers, whether an officer role can be shared by more than one forum member.</p> <p>Whether the constitution should include details on the role of elected officers as well as normal committee members.</p>	Arrangements for substitution of officers and committee members at meetings and replacement between annual elections or on resignation.

<b>Meetings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Management Committee meetings</b></li> <li>• <b>Full forum General Meetings</b></li> <li>• <b>Annual General Meetings</b></li> <li>• <b>Working Groups</b></li> </ul>	<p>To set out arrangements for convening and holding these meetings - how often they will take place, how members are notified of meetings, minimum number of members necessary to conduct business of forum. (quorum).</p>	<p>So that members know how they operate and whether meetings are held in within the terms of the constitution.</p>	<p>Minimum and maximum number of meetings in all categories in each year.</p> <p>Consider achievable numbers to meet a quorum for general and annual general meetings of the forum.</p> <p>Arrangements for working groups if desired.</p>	<p>Quorums for all meetings</p> <p>Add requirements for Management Committee members' representation on working groups.</p> <p>Set out requirements for terms of reference for working groups.</p> <p>Set out whether it is possible to co-opt non forum members into working groups.</p>
<b>Finance</b>	<p>How funds secured by the group will be kept, used and</p>	<p>To ensure transparency and accountability for</p>	<p>Whether there should be provision for a subscription/joining fee.</p>	<p>Bank account and signatory arrangements by the Committee or Treasurer.</p>

	accounted for to the wider membership and external organisations.	all funds received by the group.		Add fee element to the membership form.
<b>Neighbourhood planning</b>	To formalise how the forum will deal with key decisions relating to the production of the neighbourhood plan.	To reassure members about the forum's commitment to ensuring the production of the neighbourhood plan takes all views on board.	<p>Whether the forum's discussions will be confined to forum members only or to people and organisations in the wider neighbourhood area.</p> <p>Whether and how forum meetings will consider neighbourhood plan documents at key stages of the plan making process.</p>	

<p><b>Alteration of the constitution</b></p>	<p>To enable the constitution to be kept up to date with changing circumstances.</p>	<p>Organisations can find that their decision making processes become unworkable over time. It is important to have a transparent agreed process to make necessary changes that members can agree on.</p>	<p>Some neighbourhood forums may want to change quorum for meetings or arrangements for voting to accommodate new communication methods.</p> <p>Others may want to change the role of the forum when the neighbourhood plan is complete.</p> <p>Some may want to consider becoming Parish or Community Councils. Read more about this <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p>At what kind of meeting alterations can be considered, what notice is required, who can request alterations and how they will be made available for discussion.</p>
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<p><b>Dissolution</b></p>	<p>To set out the circumstances under which the forum would close and what would happen to any assets.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood forums have a defined life of 5 years. This period starts from when they are designated by their Local planning authority.</p>	<p>Forums may wish to consider whether there is a role for the forum after their neighbourhood plan had been made. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring planning applications in the neighbourhood plan area</li> <li>- Monitoring the application of Plan policies in the Plan area</li> <li>- Monitoring and influencing the use of Community Infrastructure Levy spending in the Plan area</li> <li>- Involvement in the delivery of Plan proposals for improvements in the Plan area.</li> <li>- Work with the local planning authority on their local plan.</li> </ul>	<p>That the forum may consider its future when the neighbourhood plan is 'made' (comes into force).</p>
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## Record keeping for forums

**Record keeping for forums is particularly important for three key reasons:**

*1. Neighbourhood forum meetings and events can be a key consultation mechanism in developing a neighbourhood plan.*

One of the documents submitted with a neighbourhood plan is the 'Consultation Statement'. A Consultation Statement must fulfil the legal obligations of the [neighbourhood plan Regulations 2012](#). Section 15(2). Part 5 of the regulations sets out that a consultation statement should contain:

- a) Details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan
- b) Explanation of how they were consulted
- c) Summary of the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted
- d) Description of how these issues and concerns have been considered and addressed
- e) As forum membership, meetings and activities are one of the main ways in which wider involvement of individual residents/workers, businesses, community groups and elected members can take place, it is important that good records are kept as the process progresses. This prevents the need to spend time re-visiting these activities to extract who was involved and when.

A key starting point for this is keeping good records of forum membership. If this is comprehensive from the start, information related to how age, gender, ethnicity, employment status, business representation and so can be collected and the participation of different groups can be tracked for every event.

The forum must also ensure that it complies with the requirements of [Data Protection](#) so that members know how their personal details will be used.

It will also enable the forum to keep its membership representative across the neighbourhood area, to fill any gaps and ensure that it meets legislative requirements.

The forum Membership Form template in Appendix A provides an idea of the type of information that it is useful to collect. This could be when people and organisations join the forum, or attend forum events and activities about the neighbourhood plan.

2. *Forum members and the forum's activities provide a good basis on which to build support ahead of the referendum on the neighbourhood plan or order.* It is important to raise awareness early about the forum's work, in order to maximise the chances of a positive result at referendum. Making available minutes, agendas and other documents on a regularly maintained web site or on request is one way to build support for the plan.
3. *Forum records can provide a key part of the evidence base for a neighbourhood plan since they may contain key decisions about what policies or proposals should be included in the plan and what criteria or other evidence was used to make these decisions.* As the neighbourhood planning process progresses the forum will make key decisions about what policies or proposals are to be included and how decisions were made; whether they were made at a Committee meeting, working group or full forum meeting and what information and evidence was provided to inform the decisions. To enable this, accurate records need to be kept.

## Appendix: Forum Membership Form Template

This form shows that there is no overlap between membership categories so that one person can only represent a view at Forums for themselves as an individual OR as a representative of a business or community group. This is to make sure that individual at meetings can exercise only one vote. If Forums decide that they wish for this not to be the case then a member would have to circle all the categories that apply to them as an individual and exercise more than one vote.

Include a map that shows the agreed Neighbourhood Forum area.

*Please write clearly*

<b>Name</b>
<b>Member type - please circle ONE category</b> 1. Individual who lives in the neighbourhood area 2. Individual who works in the neighbourhood area 3. Individual who is an agreed Community Group Representative 4. Elected Member of a district, county or London Borough Council
<b>Postal Address (Home, Employment or Community Group)</b>
<b>Email Address</b>
<b>Telephone Number</b>

ADDITIONAL DETAILS WHICH HELP US ENSURE THAT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD  
FORUM REPRESENTS ALL PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

1. Gender:	Please circle	MALE / FEMALE
2. Age		Years
3. Do you have any disabilities?	Please circle	YES / NO
Ethnic origin I would describe myself as - PLEASE TICK the appropriate box		
<b>A White:</b>		
British		
English		
Scottish		
Welsh		
Northern Irish		
Other, please specify:		
<b>B Mixed:</b>		

White and Black Caribbean	
White and Black African	
White and Asian	
Other, please specify:	
C Asian, Asian British	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Other, please specify:	
D Black, Black British	
Caribbean	
African	
Other, please specify:	
E Chinese, Chinese British	
Chinese	
Other, please specify:	

**Data Protection Statement e.g.**

All information supplied will be held by (insert name of forum), and will remain secure and confidential. Your details will only be used for the purposes of notifying you about forum meetings and activities and will not be passed on to any third parties or used for marketing purposes in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

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website to find out more:

<http://mycommunity.org.uk/>

Follow us on twitter: @mycommunityhelp

# **THE HIGHGATE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM CONSTITUTION**

**adopted by the Inaugural General Meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2012**

## **1 Purpose and Objects**

1.1 The Highgate Neighbourhood Forum ('HNF') is a neighbourhood forum as defined in the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act').

1.2 The purpose of HNF is to further the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Highgate Area as defined in section 2 below ('the Area') by acting for the Area under the provisions of the Act.

1.3 HNF membership will be open to residents living in the Area, individuals working or carrying on business in the Area, local representative groups and Borough Councillors representing all or part of the Area. HNF will aim for as wide a representation of communities in the area as possible. Membership and organisation of HNF are set out in section 3 below.

1.4 HNF will monitor development management policy and its application in the Area and will produce and maintain a Neighbourhood Development Plan as defined in section 4 below.

1.5 HNF may initiate Neighbourhood Development Orders or Community Right to Build Orders, identify Assets of Community Value, or carry out any other permitted actions.

1.6 HNF will act in accordance with General Policies and Principles set out in section 5 below.

## **2 The Highgate Neighbourhood Area ('the Area')**

2.1 The Area shall be the area shown in the map in Appendix 1 and may be changed by the Forum Committee as it considers necessary from time to time and will be finally determined on designation by the relevant authorities.

2.2 The Area is the developed residential and business part of the area which local people traditionally consider to be 'Highgate'.

2.3 As defined, the Area falls within the boundaries of two London Boroughs, Camden and Haringey.

## **3 Membership and Organisation**

### ***Membership***

3.1 Membership of HNF is open to:

- residents living in the Area, either as individual members or via representative bodies such as those outlined below;
- local businesses and individuals who work in the Area;
- Highgate Ward Councillors from both London Boroughs.

3.2 Affiliate membership (non voting) is open to:

- representative Residents' Associations, friends' groups, and amenity societies and associations, collectively described herein as 'Organisations'. Affiliated organisations are listed in Appendix 2. This list will be updated from time to time as necessary;
- the Conservation Area Advisory Committee[s] (CAAC).

### ***Forum Committee***

3.3 A Committee comprising up to 15 members will be elected at each AGM to carry out the day-to-day work of the Forum. The quorum for the Committee will be 9 members.

3.4 The Committee will elect the following officers of the Forum from its number: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Officers will serve for one year and be subject to re-election, and there will be no limit to the number of terms an officer may serve. The Chair (or the Vice Chair when acting as Chair) will have a casting vote at any Committee or General Meeting.



3.5 The Committee will direct and oversee the work of the Forum and will meet at least quarterly for this purpose.

3.6 Subcommittees or working parties may be appointed by the Committee to carry out specific tasks, to consider policies and to advise the Committee. Such bodies may be appointed from within or outside the membership of the Forum but will be responsible to the Committee.

3.7 The Committee may co-opt up to three additional members to the Committee in any year. Co-opted members will have the same voting rights as other Committee members. A co-opted member may be elected as an officer.

3.8 Councillors representing the Highgate Wards in both Boroughs will be invited to all Committee meetings and will have the same voting rights as other Committee members.

3.9 The Secretary will make minutes of General and Committee Meetings available to the members of the Forum within three weeks of the meeting unless impracticable. Organisations which are affiliated to HNF will be encouraged to communicate such information to their membership.

### ***Meetings***

3.10 Annual General Meetings will be held in May or as close to such date as practicable. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by decision of the Committee or by 30 members of the Forum applying to the Secretary. For all General Meetings, a notice of the meeting and details of any resolutions to be put to it will be sent to all Forum members at least 21 days before the meeting.

3.11 At any General Meeting each member present will have one vote. Where practicable, arrangements will be made to enable members unable to attend to appoint a proxy. Decisions of General Meetings will be by simple majority except in the cases set out in section 6 below. The quorum for a General Meeting shall be 30 members.

### ***Notices***

3.12 Notices to members will be deemed delivered if sent to the member's last notified email address, or (where no email address is given) sent by post to the last notified address.

### ***Finance***

3.13 The Forum will have the power to raise funds as necessary for its activities, by grant, donation or any other appropriate means.

3.14 The Committee will open one or more bank accounts as necessary in the name of the Forum. All funds raised for the Forum will be held in such accounts. The Committee will nominate bank signatories.

3.15 The Committee will where necessary insure any assets it holds, and by insurance or otherwise indemnify its officers against liabilities arising from their work for the Forum.

3.16 Subject to funding, the Committee may commission advisory services, surveys or any other activity in support of the Objects.

### ***Register of Committee Members' Interests***

3.17 The Secretary will keep a Register of Committee Members' Interests detailing any financial interests in the Area or any other interest which could be deemed to have an influence on decisions likely to come before the Committee. Members will abstain from voting on any matter in which they have a financial interest.

## **4 Neighbourhood Development Plan**

4.1 The Highgate Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) will set out policies for the development and use of land within the Area. As provided for in the Act, it will be subject to extensive consultation and examination, including where appropriate a referendum within the Area.

4.2 The NDP will include, where appropriate, specific policies for identified parts of the Area, including conservation policies. In a Conservation Area, conservation policies will be agreed with the relevant CAAC.

4.3 The NDP will aim to:

- complement the Local Development Frameworks and Conservation Area Appraisals as produced by the relevant Planning Authorities to ensure that all development is sympathetic to the character of the Area;
- identify locations for potential sensitive development that will, within the Local Development Frameworks, include affordable housing, retail, business and community use;
- express aspirations for the future development of traffic and transport serving or passing through the Area;
- provide for the preservation and improvement of private and public open space;
- nominate Assets of Community Value for listing by the appropriate local authority;
- set a framework for the retail and business improvement of the Area;
- guide the Planning and Highway Authorities towards improvements in the public realm;
- pay due attention to sustainability and carbon reduction;
- pay due attention to the surface and underground water environment, flood and pollution risks and soil stability.

4.4 The NDP will include policies aimed at generating employment in the Area and promoting business activity, including retail. It will aim to promote a good range of shops in the community with particular emphasis on encouraging smaller enterprises.

## **5 General Policies and Principles**

5.1 HNF will take the distinctive character and heritage of Highgate into account in all its actions, and will aim to ensure that all development in the Area preserves or enhances this character.

5.2 HNF will aim to promote Highgate as a vibrant business and residential community with an improved public realm.

5.3 HNF will aim for improvements in the local environment including those directed towards carbon reduction.

5.4 HNF will generally support actions aimed at generating employment in the Area.

5.5 HNF will promote policies to maximise social benefit, community links, services for young people, crime reduction and support for elderly and vulnerable members of the community.

5.6 HNF will operate respecting all differences including gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability and income.

5.7 HNF will encourage all interested residents and all representative groupings of residents or businesses in the Area to become members of HNF and to work alongside HNF to further their joint objectives.

## **6 Amendments and Dissolution**

6.1 Amendments to the body of this Constitution will be by decision of a General Meeting carried out in accordance with 3.10 and 3.11 above, with the exception that such a vote will only be carried if supported by 75% or more of those voting.

6.2 HNF may be dissolved by decision of a General Meeting specifically called for this purpose and carried out in accordance with 3.10 and 3.11 above, with the exception that such a vote will only be carried if supported by 75% or more of those voting.

6.3 In the event of dissolution, any property or funds held by HNF will be

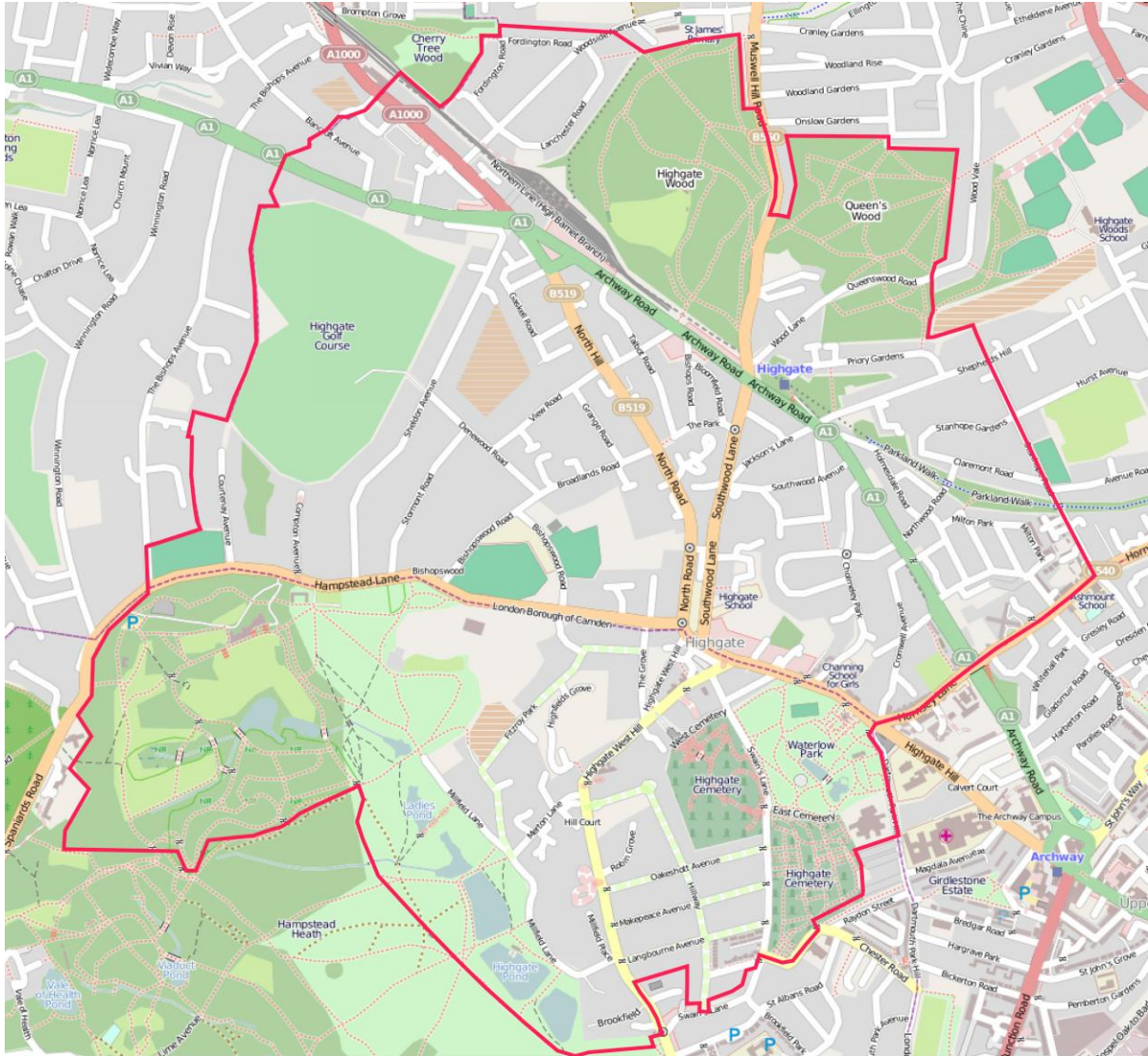
- subject to the agreement of the Members at General Meeting, allocated to one or more nominated organisations set up to continue the work of HNF, or
- in the absence of any such organisation and subject to any statutory regulations, distributed equally to the constituent local organisations who are its members (but not to individual members).

6.4 In accordance with the Act, a formal review of the functions and achievements of HNF will be carried out five years after its formation. Following such review, and consultation with its members, HNF will decide to continue, amend or dissolve itself as considered appropriate.

## Appendix 1

### Map of proposed Highgate Neighbourhood Forum Area

last updated July 12, 2012: for future updates see  
<http://www.highgateneighbourhoodforum.org.uk/Area.html>



## **Appendix 2**

### **Highgate Neighbourhood Forum affiliated organisations**

last updated July 12, 2012: for future updates see  
[http://www.highgateneighbourhoodforum.org.uk/Constitution\\_%26\\_Minutes.html](http://www.highgateneighbourhoodforum.org.uk/Constitution_%26_Minutes.html)

Brookfield Mansions Freehold Ltd  
Cholmeley Lodge Residents Ltd  
Cromwell Area Residents Association  
Fitzroy Park Residents Association  
Fordington Road Residents Association  
Friends of Parkland Walk  
Friends of Queens Wood  
Friends of Waterlow Park  
Harington Scheme  
Highgate Business Circle  
Highgate Conservaton Area Advisory Committee  
Highgate Cemetery Trust  
Highgate Literary and Scientific Associaton  
Highgate Residents Association (Highgate Estate)  
Highgate Safer Neighbourhood Panel (Haringey)  
The Highgate Society  
Highgate Village Business Association  
Highpoint Management Board  
Holly Lodge Conservation Area Committee  
Holly Lodge Estate Committee  
Hornsey Historical Society  
Kenwood Estate (English Heritage)  
Kingsley Place and Somerset Gardens Residents Assoc  
Northwood Hall Residents Association  
Muguran Hindu Temple  
Pond Square Residents Associaton  
Southwood House Estate Residents Company  
Southwood Park Residents Association  
St Michaels Primary School  
Transition Highgate  
West Hill Park Management Co Ltd

## **SHOREHAM BEACH NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM CONSTITUTION**

### **1. Name of Organisation**

Shoreham Beach Neighbourhood Forum

### **2. Aims**

The Forum aims to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing and conditions in the Shoreham Beach area as shown on the attached plan (the area), particularly through the preparation and implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

### **3. Membership**

3.1 The membership of the Forum is open to:

- individuals who live in the area
- individuals who work in the area
- individuals who are elected members of Adur District Council and/or West Sussex County Council whose ward or division includes the area

3.2 The Forum must have a minimum membership of 21 individuals, each of whom either

- lives in the area
- works in the area
- is an elected member of the Adur District Council and/or West Sussex County Council whose ward or division includes the area

3.3 The Forum will strive to have a minimum of one member from each of the three categories in 3.2 above.

3.4 The Forum will be as representative as possible of the people who live and work in the area. Thus membership will be drawn from different places in the area and from different sections of the community.

3.5 Membership will begin as soon as the membership form has been received.

3.6 A list of members will be kept by the Membership Secretary.

3.7 Ceasing to be a Member:

3.7.1 Members may resign at any time in writing to the Secretary

3.7.2 Offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the equal opportunities policy may be asked not to attend further meetings or to resign

from the group if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

#### **4. Equal opportunities**

The Shoreham Beach Neighbourhood Forum will not discriminate on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age.

#### **5. Officers and Committee**

The business of the Forum will be managed by a Committee.

5.1. The membership of the Committee will be as follows:

Chair  
Vice Chair  
Secretary  
Membership Secretary  
Treasurer  
Working Group Leaders and Deputies

5.2 The officers of the Committee (Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer) will be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Forum.

5.3 In the event of an officer standing down during the year a replacement will be elected by the next General Meeting of members.

5.4 Any Committee member not attending a meeting without apology for three months will be contacted by the Committee and asked if they wish to resign.

5.5 The officers' roles are as follows:

- Chair, who shall chair both general and Committee meetings
- Vice-Chair, who shall deputise for the Chair
- Secretary, who shall be responsible for the taking of minutes and the distribution of all papers
- Membership secretary, who shall be responsible for keeping records of members
- Treasurer who shall be responsible for maintaining accounts

5.6 The Committee has the power to co-opt up to 5 additional members to ensure maximum feasible representativeness of the people who live and/or work in the area.

5.7 Committee responsibilities:

5.7.1 The overall management of the business of the Forum

5.7.2 Agreeing and ensuring the implementation of the Communications and Community Engagement Strategy

- 5.7.3 Coordinating the work of the Working Groups (Working Groups are referred to in more detail at paragraph 7)
- 5.7.4 Drafting, agreeing and promoting the implementation of the Shoreham Beach Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031
- 5.8 Committee meetings
  - 5.8.1 The Committee will normally meet monthly, using a variety of venues across the area.
  - 5.8.2 On three occasions each year the Committee Meeting will be open to all Forum Members
  - 5.8.3 Agenda Papers and Minutes will be posted on the Shoreham Beach Residents Association website and will be available in printed format on request.
  - 5.8.4 The quorum for the Committee will be 5 members

## **6. Meetings of the Forum**

### **6.1 Annual General Meeting**

- 6.1.1 An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held within fifteen months of the previous AGM.
- 6.1.2 All members will be notified in writing at least 3 weeks before the date of the meeting, giving the venue, date and time.
- 6.1.3 Nominations of officers for the Committee may be made to the Secretary before the meeting, or at the meeting.
- 6.1.4 The quorum for the AGM will be 10 members,
- 6.1.5 At the AGM:
  - The Committee will present a report of the work of the Shoreham Beach Neighbourhood Forum over the year.
  - The Committee will present the accounts of the Shoreham Beach Neighbourhood Forum for the previous year.
  - The officers and Committee for the next year will be elected.
  - Any proposals given to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting will be discussed.

### **6.2 Special General Meetings**

- 6.2.1 The Secretary will call a Special General Meeting at the request of the majority of the Committee or at least eight other members giving a written request to the Chair or Secretary stating the reason for their request.
- 6.2.2 The meeting will take place within twenty-one days of the request.
- 6.2.3 All members will be given two weeks notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda. Notice may be by telephone, email or post and

these details will be posted on the Shoreham Beach Residents Association website.

- 6.2.4 The quorum for the Special General Meeting will be 10 members, whichever is the greater number.

### **6.3 Rules of Procedure for Committee Meetings, Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings**

- 6.3.1 All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement that everyone present can agree to.
- 6.3.2 If a consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members present. If the number of votes cast on each side are equal, the chair of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

### **6.4 General Meetings of the Forum: Have Your Say Events**

- 6.4.1 These events are open to all Forum members and members of the public.
- 6.4.2 There will be a minimum of two Events in the year following the AGM..
- 6.4.3 The content and structure of these Events will vary according to priorities determined by the Committee. Generally the programme will enable the Forum to:
- showcase its activities, particularly the evolving Neighbourhood Plan
  - recruit new members;
  - enable Forum Working Groups to have discussions with wider groups of local people;
  - facilitate Q&A sessions with the Local Planning Authority officers, councillors and developers with an interest in the area; and
  - share experiences with voluntary and community sector organisations from elsewhere in the district and other towns and cities which are preparing and involved in implementing Neighbourhood Plans.

## **7. Working Groups**

- 7.1 The Working Groups and their Leaders are established by the Committee.
- 7.2 A Working Group will comprise a minimum of 2 people from the Forum area.
- 7.3 Working Groups develop the working arrangements which suit them best and meet as required to investigate and discuss the issues assigned to them.
- 7.4 The leader or deputy leader reports to the Forum Committee normally once per month.

## **8. Partner Organisations**

- 8.1 To further its aims, the Forum will work in partnership with relevant public, private and community/voluntary sector organisations.



8.2 In particular, the Forum will work closely with the Shoreham Beach Residents Association

8.3 The work of the Forum will complement, rather than duplicate, the work of other voluntary and community sector organisations in the area.

## **9. Finances**

9.1 An account will be maintained on behalf of the Forum at a bank agreed by the Committee. Three cheque signatories will be nominated by the Committee (one to be the Treasurer). Any two of these must sign every cheque. The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household.

9.2 Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given to each meeting.

9.3 All money raised by or on behalf of the Shoreham Beach Neighbourhood Forum is only to be used to further the aims of the group, as specified in item 2 of this Constitution.

## **10. Amendments to the Constitution**

10.1 Amendments to the constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.

10.2 Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of the meeting.

10.3 Any proposal to amend the constitution will require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

## **11. Dissolution**

11.1 If a meeting of the Management Committee, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down the Forum it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.

11.2 If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a community group or local charitable organization, in order to benefit the Shoreham Beach neighbourhood. The group/organisation to receive the donation will be agreed at the meeting held to agree the dissolution.

**This constitution was agreed at the Inaugural General Meeting of the Shoreham Beach Neighbourhood Forum on .....2014.**

**Name and position in the Forum .....**

**.....**

**Signed .....**

**Name and position in the Forum.....**

**.....**

**Signed .....**