

# Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

## 1. Name and Area

- 1.1 The name of the Forum is the **Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Forum** (the Forum).
- 1.2 The area for which the Forum will prepare a Neighbourhood Plan is the **Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Area** (the Neighbourhood Area), and is shown on the attached map, Appendix 2.

## 2. Purpose of the Forum

- 2.1 The purposes of the Neighbourhood Forum are:
  - To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area
  - To prepare a future Neighbourhood Plan for the Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Area, to review and update the current made Neighbourhood Plan
  - To enable the participation of all stakeholders, business owners, and community involvement in the Neighbourhood Area in the preparation and production of the Neighbourhood Plan
  - Any other appropriate purpose agreed by the Forum and compatible with its statutory status as a Neighbourhood Forum.

## 3. Functions

- 3.1 The Forum's functions include:
  - To engage with the community, businesses and other stakeholders, to inform any new Neighbourhood Plan
  - To put together a relevant and proportionate evidence base to support planning policies of any new Neighbourhood Plan
  - To invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate to finance the work of the Forum (ensuring that there is no conflict of interests in receiving funding)
  - To publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, engagement events, seminars, and other relevant activities

- To work with groups that have common interests to exchange information, advice and knowledge, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, residents' bodies and other statutory and non-statutory organisations
- To employ or appoint staff and/or volunteers as necessary to conduct activities to meet the objectives of the Forum
- To use the existing and any future updated or new Neighbourhood Plan policies as a basis for making representations on planning applications and to monitor decisions made by the London Borough of Brent Council (LBB)
- To take any lawful form of action which is necessary to achieve the purpose of the Forum, including taking out any contracts which it may see fit.

## 4. Membership

- 4.1 The Forum will comprise at least 21 individuals who live or work in the Neighbourhood Area or who are elected members. The Forum will ensure compliance with planning legislation, policy, and guidance.
- 4.2 Membership is open to
- (i) individuals who live in the Neighbourhood Area,
  - (ii) individuals who work in the Neighbourhood Area (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise), and
  - (iii) individuals who are elected members of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the Neighbourhood Area.
- All members must meet at least one of the above statutory membership requirements.
- 4.3 Membership will be drawn from different parts of the Neighbourhood Area and different sections of the community in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.4 An application form for membership will be prepared (paper and digital versions) for completion by prospective members.
- 4.5 Applications will be checked against the statutory criteria for membership and where these are met, confirmation of membership will be sent to the applicant.
- 4.6 Each member should inform the Secretary of any changes to home address, place of work, and email address.
- 4.7 The Secretary will inform members of termination of membership if any changes of address or circumstances would mean that they no

longer meet the statutory requirements for membership.

- 4.8 Resignation from the Forum should be done in writing by email or letter to the Secretary.
- 4.9 There is no fee for membership of the Forum.
- 4.10 Forum members shall respect the principles of equality, fairness, and inclusivity in their interactions with fellow members and the wider community.

## **5 Governance**

- 5.1 The Forum will elect the following officers from its membership at its first meeting following designation and then through an Annual General Meeting (AGM):
  - Chair or co-chairs
  - Vice-chair(s)
  - Treasurer
  - Secretary.
- 5.2 Those wishing to stand for an officer position will need be members of the Forum and give at least 14 working days' notice in writing to the Secretary before the AGM.
- 5.3 The roles of officers are set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.4 In addition to the officers, Forum members may be appointed on an informal basis to lead or support on Forum matters, such as:
  - Administration
  - Web site and social media
  - Community engagement.

## **6 Meetings and Decision-Making**

- 6.1 All Forum members are entitled to participate in meetings and to vote on decisions. Each Forum member has one vote and all decisions at Forum meetings will be made on a show of hands of Forum members who are entitled to vote at the meeting. A member participating in a vote will be personally liable for ensuring that their participation in the voting process complies with the provisions outlined in this constitution and the Forum's regulatory obligations. No provision of

this constitution shall be construed to create joint liability among the Forum members for the consequences of individual voting decisions. Where a Forum member is unable to attend a meeting, arrangements will be made in exceptional circumstances to enable the member to cast their vote.

6.2 Decisions will be minuted by the Secretary or other agreed person and:

- Such minutes will then be circulated to Forum member as soon as possible after the meeting
- Minutes will be checked by Forum officers before being posted to the web site within 2 weeks of a meeting taking place
- Minutes will be presented to the following meeting of the Forum, for agreement.

6.3 Meetings will be held in an open and transparent manner and be open to members of the public. The Forum may call meetings of the members attending in person or virtually as they think fit. Such meetings may be in person or hybrid meetings as the circumstances allow.

6.4 At least three meetings of the Forum will be held each year, one of which will be an AGM.

6.5 The Annual General Meeting will:

- elect the officers of the Forum for the following year
- receive a report from the Secretary on activities that have taken place in the previous year
- receive an annual statement from the Treasurer
- receive an annual membership statement and confirmation that the Forum membership still meets statutory requirements.

6.6 At the Annual General Meeting elections of the Forum officers shall be held on the basis of a show of hands for each candidate by voting members.

6.7 A notice and meeting agenda will be sent to Forum members at least 10 working days before a meeting (notice will be deemed delivered if sent to the member's last notified email or postal address).

6.8 Where arrangements have been made for a meeting to be held virtually or as a hybrid meeting, the notice calling the meeting shall state that fact and include details of how a Forum member may attend the meeting virtually.

- 6.9 The quorum required to make decisions is 11 or more Forum members. A Forum member shall be deemed to be present by attending either in person or virtually where arrangements for virtual attendance have been made.
- 6.10 The Forum will maintain a register of Forum member interests.
- 6.11 All Forum members must declare any interests, such as memberships of other organisations.
- 6.12 Potential conflicts of interest should be declared (e.g., conflicts of interest could include where a Neighbourhood Plan policy would affect the personal, financial, business or landowning interests of a Forum member).
- 6.13 Forum members will abstain from voting on any matters in which they have a conflict of interest.

## **7 Operational Matters**

- 7.1 The Forum will maintain a web site and an email address.
- 7.2 The web site will provide information on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan and links to key documentation.
- 7.3 The Forum will use social media, printed media and other methods to raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan and to invite people to engage with the preparation of any new Neighbourhood Plan, any update/s and future plan-making processes.
- 7.4 The Forum may set-up committees or working groups as required, including defining roles and any powers (such as the ability to apply for funding) and such arrangements will be agreed by the Forum, as necessary.
- 7.5 The Treasurer will be responsible for financial monitoring and reporting to the Forum.
- 7.6 The bank account will have at least two and not more than three signatories, all of whom should be elected officers, and one of whom shall be the Treasurer.
- 7.7 Any money acquired by the Forum shall be paid into the Forum's bank account or, where required by funders, into an account of a corporate body that has agreed to hold monies on behalf of the Forum.

- 7.8 All funds must be used for the Forum’s designated purpose and in accordance with any grant application and grant offer and for no other purpose.
- 7.9 Legitimate expenses may be paid to Forum members, subject to prior approval from the Treasurer.
- 7.10 Expenses claims will need to be made via a form provided and must be accompanied by receipts.

## **8 Duration**

- 8.1 The duration of the Forum is five years from the Forum’s date of designation, unless a new redesignation has been granted before this time.
- 8.2 The Neighbourhood Forum may discontinue prior to this date if it is no-longer required, as follows:
- A decision to discontinue would be approved by more than half of the complete membership of the Forum
  - The London Borough of Brent Council (LBB) would then be informed of the vote and requested to de-designate the Forum
  - Any funding would be returned to funding bodies, where it comprises unused grant monies
  - Other money or resources would be given to a suitable organisation set up to continue the work of the Forum or other not-for-profit local organisations, to be agreed by the Forum.

## **9 Amendment to the Constitution**

- 9.1 This constitution may be amended as follows:
- Proposed amendments must be conveyed to the Secretary formally in writing
  - Forum members will review and consult with the London Borough of Brent Council (as the local planning authority) on any such amendment and the outcome of the consultation will be reported to Forum members
  - During an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or general meeting, a vote will be conducted only if a quorum is present
  - The LBB Council will be informed of any subsequent decision to amend the constitution

- Such amendments will only come into force once the LBB Council has confirmed that the constitution still meets legal requirements.

## **Appendix 1: Roles of Forum Officers**

### **Chair/Vice Chair**

Chairs and Vice Chairs will:

- Provide leadership for the preparation of a new Neighbourhood Plan, ensuring that the Plan is based on proportionate evidence and community and stakeholder engagement
- Chair meetings of the Neighbourhood Forum, ensuring that they are conducted in an orderly, fair and lawful manner, in accordance with this constitution and with the statutory purpose of Neighbourhood Forums and statutory process for preparing Neighbourhood Plans
- Act as a spokesperson and figurehead as appropriate, including in dealings with the local planning authority and external stakeholders
- Agree agendas and key decisions, with the Secretary
- Ensure that the implementation of decisions is clearly assigned and monitored
- Ensure that there is an effective relationship between the Forum and any committees or working groups
- Ensure that Forum meetings and business are conducted in a respectful, constructive and reasonable manner and to address directly any instances of misconduct or complaints.

### **Secretary**

The Secretary will:

- Organise Forum meetings, including the Annual General Meeting (AGM), in accordance with this constitution and the statutory purpose of Neighbourhood Forums and process for Neighbourhood Plans
- Draw up agendas for meetings together with the Chair and Vice Chair
- Maintain records, communicate with members, and ensure the smooth functioning of the Forum's administrative processes
- Ensure that the timing and location of meetings are as inclusive as possible
- Ensure that decisions, actions and key deliberations are adequately and concisely minuted
- Deal with correspondence (letters/emails), working with other officers
- Administer membership applications, working with other officers.

## **Treasurer**

The Treasurer will:

- Maintain the financial affairs of the Forum, ensuring that proper procedures, systems and records are in place
- Oversee the production of necessary financial reports/returns, accounts and audits
- Report on financial matters and accounts to Forum meetings, including the AGM
- Act as a joint signatory on the Forum account, together with any one or two other Forum Officers.

## Appendix 2.

### Map of Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Forum Area (as at August 2023)

