

# Constitution of Network Wapping Neighbourhood Planning Forum

## Preamble

This constitution attempts to implement “policy governance” and follows the guidelines given by LBTH and Locality in 2013, as follows: All neighbourhood forums will require a written constitution. It is a good idea to keep the written constitution as clear and simple as possible. It should include:

- the name of the neighbourhood forum
- the boundary of the neighbourhood forum
- the purpose of the neighbourhood forum
- working arrangements, including sub-groups, partners and their roles
- pattern of meetings
- details of how decisions will be made
- details of governance, including official positions (such as chair)
- arrangements for management and financial management
- details of how potential conflicts of interest will be recorded and managed
- membership and procedures for replacement of members where necessary
- duration of the forum (5 years from being approved)

## 1) Name

The name of the organisation is Network Wapping Neighbourhood Planning Forum (NPF), hereafter called The Forum.

## 2) Boundary

The Neighbourhood Planning Area (NPA) is shown on the map in Appendix A. It is the area between the Thames and the Railway Viaduct to the north of Royal Mint Street and Cable Street. This area is bounded by Mansell Street and Tower Bridge Approach to the west and Butcher Row to the east.

## 3) Purpose

To provide an organisation for the Neighbourhood Planning Area (NPA) that will carry out any or all of the functions described for Neighbourhood Planning Forums (NPF) in the Localism Act of 2011 as interpreted by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (The Act). The NPA for The Forum is outlined on the map in Appendix A.

The functions of The Forum shall include but not be limited to:

- to improve the area to the benefit of all inhabitants and workers of the area and visitors to the area
- to improve to a world class standard of excellence and having a locally specific appropriateness, the social, environmental and economic standards found within the whole area
- to foster community spirit, initiative, achievement and awareness
- to prepare, towards achieving the first three objectives, a neighbourhood plan for the area in liaison with relevant stakeholders, the local planning authority, and any other forums in adjacent areas
- to encourage, towards achieving the first three objectives, the goodwill support and involvement of all communities within and relevant to the area, and the goodwill, support and involvement of the best assistance available particularly within the area, and also from beyond the area
- to strengthen, towards achieving the first three objectives, networks within the area and to the area
- list of community objectives: (list from September 2012 meeting)

- support lively inclusive public streets where and when appropriate
- support 'Green Grid' routes
- support traffic calming on The Highway
- support serenity in public places where and when appropriate
- support educational facilities
- support planning gain being spent locally and on publicly accessible infrastructure and initiatives
- support compensation for building development generated nuisance
- support developments of an appropriate height and density
- support the integration and awareness of past culture specific to the area
- support environmentally progressive development to a world class standard of excellence

#### **4) Working Arrangements**

The Forum shall consist of members.

The Forum will comply with all relevant equality and anti-discrimination legislation.

Notification shall consist of by an insertion of a notice in East End Life or posting notices visibly on The Forum web site, posting of at least 10 posters reasonably distributed around the NPA, and sending of emails to addresses in the membership list. All shall be done at least 14 days before the event subject of notification and assuming sufficient resources are available.

The members shall elect Forum Officers and additional members of The Committee at the AGM (initially at a General Meeting called and run by The Steering Group).

The Committee shall consist of ten members including the Forum Officers and shall organise and run The Forum on behalf of the members to accomplish the purpose and functions The Forum undertakes. In the event an Officer or a Committee Member leave their role part way through a year then the committee shall co-opt an additional member and elect an interim Officer who shall serve until the next AGM.

The Committee may appoint working groups and Support Officers as required to fulfil the functions The Forum undertakes, including a Neighbourhood Plan Team to create and update a Neighbourhood Plan. The chair of each working group shall be a member who shall answer to The Committee for the good functioning of the Working Group. Other working group members may be members of The Forum and/or specialists as appropriate. A written description of Support Officer roles and duration of post shall be maintained by the Secretary. The role and post of every Support Office shall be reviewed and its continuation decided not later than 12 months after appointment.

The Committee shall identify, decide upon, and write operational policies and procedures by which The Forum business is conducted that are consistent with The Act and this constitution.

All AGMs and Committee Meetings to be minuted. Other meetings shall not be minuted unless the majority of NPF members present request this.

#### **5) Meetings**

Initial organisation and operation of The Forum shall be agreed at a General Meeting called and run by the Steering Group which consists of people who signed the designated application who shall also be deemed to be the initial members of The Forum. The Steering Group shall cease to exist upon election of The Committee.

If additional organisational details are required for The Forum, they shall be decided upon by vote at the AGM or a General Meeting. Operational policies and procedures for The Forum shall be decided and written by The Committee as needed and shall promote transparent and democratic operation of The Forum.

An AGM shall be held each year within three months of the end of the financial year, which shall run from 1 April to 31 March. General Meetings may be called at any time by The Committee or by a written submission to The Committee containing the signatures of at least 5% of the members or 21 members whichever is greater.

The Committee shall meet at least once every two months to address current operations of The Forum and plan future operations of The Forum. The Committee shall arrange from time to time General Meetings open to the Membership and others from the NPA to address topical and relevant issues as necessary.

A quorum for the committee shall be 5 or more members including at least two Forum Officers. A quorum for an AGM or a General Meetings shall be 1% of the list of members or at least 18 members, which ever is greater, including the Chair or Deputy Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

All meetings shall be conducted in a democratic manner according to the current or immediately previous version of Roberts Rules of Orders, or according to a similar set of identifiable and democratic meeting rules in common use as decided by The Committee.

## **6) Decisions**

Decisions at any meetings shall be by majority vote of members. Secret voting shall be conducted for a specific issue at the request of 10% of the members in any meeting. The chair of any meeting shall not vote but may cast a deciding vote in case of ties.

Decisions regarding operational matters, including planning matters, shall be informed by an understanding of the views of the affected members and the affected people within the NPA. Where thought to be necessary and appropriate by The Committee the informed understanding of the views of affected members and affected people within the NPA may be sought by means of survey, sampling, and other valid research techniques. The committee may invite specialists to address any forum meeting to facilitate the work of the forum.

## **7) Governance and Officers**

The Forum Officers of The Forum shall be: Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Committee shall decide the functions of each office and the Secretary shall maintain a written description and guide for the conduct of each office. The Forum Officers functions description and guide shall be consistent with The Act.

All members shall sign the constitution to recognize it as the governing document of the NPF. The constitution may be modified at a duly constituted AGM or a General meeting by majority vote.

## **8) Management and Finances**

The Committee shall make specific policies and procedures regarding finances and the handling of money by The Forum that are ethical, transparent as possible, in accordance with relevant legislation, follow the accepted standard accounting and financial practices for the sector, comply with any other requirements imposed by central and local government, and are not to the particular benefit of any individual member.

The Forum's accounting and administrative year shall run from 01 April to 31 March.

A summary report on finances shall be included in the minutes of every meeting of The Committee. An annual financial report shall be presented at the AGM.

A Forum Officer may request explanation of details of any item in the summary report on finances.

A purchase order system shall be used for any expenditures over £100. A purchase order must be signed by a Forum Officer and at least one other member of The Committee.

The current books of accounts may be examined by any member upon request, but may not transcribed or copied by any means.

Support Officers to conduct and manage detailed aspects of The Forum business may be appointed as required by The Committee. To the extent possible, Support Officers shall be members.

Cheques will require two signatories. Signatories will be appointed from members of the Forum Committee, usually, the Treasurer, Secretary and the Chair, but other committee members may be nominated.

## **9) Declaration of Interests**

A member must declare in advance the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect, (financial, party political, employment, land ownership or other organization interest) which he or she has in a proposed agenda item, policy, transaction or arrangement with the Forum or in any transaction or arrangement entered into by the Forum which has not previously been declared.

A member of officer must absent himself or herself from any discussions of the Forum and shall not vote in any matter in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between his or her duty to act solely in the interests of the Forum and any personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest).

## **10) Membership**

Any person may become a member in accordance with the qualifications for membership specified in The Act.

The Forum shall make notification of its existence and the availability of membership in The Forum known to people in the NPA at least four times per year. Notification is described in the Working Arrangements above.

The forum shall maintain a minimum of 21 members.

Members and Associate Members, as defined below, of The Forum agree to participate regularly in the work of The Forum, to attend meetings at least twice per year, and participate in decision making.

Membership is requested by filling in a membership application form available via the Secretary or on The Forum web site. A signed copy of the application must be delivered to the Secretary or Chair in person or by Post.

Membership is granted by the qualified applicant signing a copy of the current constitution and any codes of conduct that have been adopted, followed by the Secretary or a person designated by The Committee entering the name of the applicant on the list of members maintained by the Secretary. The list of members is available for examination, but not transcription or copying in any form, by any member or qualified applicant.

The Forum also recognizes Associate Members, who are those people who apply for membership, do not qualify for membership, but who nonetheless wish to contribute to the work of The Forum. The applicant associate member must sign the constitution and any codes of conduct, after which their name is entered on the list of members as "associate member". Associate members cannot vote on any matter related to The Forum. Nor can they make representations at meetings unless requested to do so by the Chair.

Classes of membership other than members and associate members may be created by The Committee if required. Should these classes have voting rights, then the class must be accepted by a vote at an AGM or General Meeting before becoming valid.

Termination or suspension may be enacted where the member has requested termination in writing. Membership may be temporarily suspended following disruptive behaviour at a formally convened NPF meeting.

A terminated or suspended member may appeal the termination or suspension. An appeal shall be heard by a hearing group of 5 NPF members randomly chosen from the membership list, who then also agree to participate in the appeal. The hearing group shall listen to/read the representations of the Chair and the member following which they shall submit a written decision regarding the validity of the termination or suspension of membership to be delivered within a week of the meeting to the Chair, Secretary, and the member.

Terminated or suspended members may not attend meetings or vote until the termination or suspension is lifted by a vote of The Committee.

#### **11) Duration of The Forum**

The powers of The Forum as specified in The Act shall end five years after the date of its designation by the Mayor and the Cabinet of LBTH or at such time the Mayor and Cabinet choose to remove its designation.

The Mayor and the Cabinet may extend the existence of The Forum powers by their vote for a further period of their choice up to five years. The Mayor and Cabinet may decide by voting to extend invitations for a new NPF after a period of five years.

During the existence of The Forum, it may decide to incorporate itself, in which case The Forum shall continue to exist as an incorporated body operating according to its Articles of Incorporation after its powers under The Act have terminated.

Upon dissolution of the Forum, for whatever reason, any remaining funds after all bills and charges have been settled shall be returned to the provider from which the funds were received.