

## **Constitution of Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Forum**

### **1. Name**

The name of the forum shall be the Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Forum (“the Forum”).

### **2. Neighbourhood Area**

The Forum will pursue its objectives in the area shown on the attached map (“the Area”) subject to amendments as may from time to time be agreed with the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark, carrying out their functions as local planning authorities (together the “Planning Authorities”). The agreed ‘Lead Authority’ is the London Borough of Lewisham.

### **3. Purpose**

- 3.1** The purpose of the Forum is to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of residents of, and businesses and/or properly constituted voluntary and not-for-profit groups located in, the Area, and shall address itself to issues of local concern, including (but not limited to) the appearance and conservation of the Area, its heritage, the safety and security of those living and working in the Area, and the standards of town planning, urban design, architecture and transport planning.

### **4. Objectives**

- 4.1** The Localism Act 2011 enabled the creation of neighbourhood forums, the main purpose of which is to enable those forums to produce neighbourhood plans (each a “Neighbourhood Plan”) to further the social, economic and environmental well-being of individuals and organisations in their respective areas.

**4.2** The objectives of the Forum are to:

**4.2.1** conserve and improve the Area for the benefit of those persons living and working in the Area;

**4.2.2** prepare, in partnership with the Planning Authorities, a Neighbourhood Plan for the Area, having due regard to the importance of trying to be broadly representative of residents and businesses in the Area ;

**4.2.3** improve and support cross border planning and processes in the Area;

**4.2.4** promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Area ;

**4.2.5** support community projects which benefit the Area;

**4.2.6** provide a forum for discussion of issues that may affect the Area ;

**4.2.7** encourage members of the Forum to participate in its activities for the promotion and

improvement of the Area ; and

4.2.8 foster community spirit and social cohesion and encourage civic pride.

4.3 The Forum shall at all times be a non-political organisation which shall act in a balanced way having regard to the long term interests of the residents and businesses in the Area.

## **5. Powers**

**5.1** In furtherance of the Objectives, but not otherwise, the Steering Group of the Forum (" the Committee") shall have the power to :

5.1.1 promote the health, social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the residents of the Area and to work together as members, irrespective of gender, ethnicity , religion, sexual orientation or political views;

5.1.2 promote sustainable development , environmental improvement and conservation in the Area;

5.1.3 work with other similar groups and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, such groups being, without limitation, other neighbourhood fora, voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory bodies;

5.1.4 publicise and promote the work of the Forum and to organize meetings, training courses, events and seminars;

5.1.5 invite and receive contributions, where appropriate to raise finance from private and public sectors including by way of membership fees to promote the objectives of the Forum, and to open a bank account to hold and manage such funds; and .

5.1.6 do all such things as are lawful and necessary to achieve the objectives of the Forum , including entering into such contracts as the Committee may consider necessary or desirable to promote the objectives of the Forum.

## **6. Membership**

6.1 Membership of the Forum shall comprise at least 21 individuals who live or work in the Area.

6.2 Membership of the Forum is voluntary and is open to :

6.2.1 individuals who live in the Area;

6.2.2 individuals who work whether for business carried on there or otherwise, or volunteer for properly constituted voluntary groups in the Area;

6.2.3 community and not-for-profit organisations which operate in the Area (through their duly

appointed Representatives) and whose aims are consistent with the purpose and objectives of the Forum;

- 6.2.4 elected representatives from each local authority ward, the whole or part of which falls within the Area, as ex officio members.
- 6.2.5 Affiliate membership is open to representatives from residents associations, friends' groups, churches and other faith groups, schools, amenity societies and other recognized community associations that are based in or support the Area (each an "Affiliate Member").
- 6.3 The Committee may refuse to accept, or may revoke, membership of any individual, or organisation which in its opinion fails to meet the criteria for membership or which acts in a way inimical to the purpose of the Forum. Any person or organization whose membership is revoked shall have the right to appeal to a General Meeting of the Forum.
- 6.4 Any member of the Forum may resign their membership by giving written notice to the Secretary.

## **7 Committee and Officers**

- 7.1 The day-to-day business of the Forum shall be conducted by the Committee which shall comprise not less than 5 and no more than 10 members of the Forum elected at a General Meeting. The Committee shall include at least 2 members who are resident or work in the London Borough of Lewisham (each a "Lewisham Representative") and at least 2 members who are resident in or work in the London Borough of Southwark (each a "Southwark Representative").
- 7.2 The Committee shall conduct the business of the Forum in an efficient and fair way, mindful of their responsibilities to all those living and working in the Area.
- 7.3 Committee members shall abide by collective decisions made and shall always represent the Forum in a positive and responsible manner.
- 7.4 Members of the Committee shall not use their position as members of the Forum or the Committee to seek preferential or pecuniary advantage for themselves or any family member or member of their household.
- 7.5 Member of the Committee may not receive any payment from Forum funds, other than bona fide expenses which have first been approved by the Treasurer in writing and which shall subsequently be recorded in the minutes of the next Committee meeting.
- 7.6 All Committee members shall be at least 16 years of age and shall have lived, volunteered or worked in the Area for a minimum period of 12 months immediately prior to becoming a member of the Committee.
- 7.7 Councillors or others elected to public office for any part of the Area shall not be eligible for election, but may be co-opted to the Committee.

- 7.8 The term of office of any member of the Committee shall expire at each AGM and members shall be eligible to stand for re-election for a continuous period of up to 5 years.
- 7.9 The Committee may co-opt up to five additional voting members for a term to expire no later than the following AGM. The power of co-option shall be used inter alia to ensure that as far as possible the Committee has a reasonable balance and reflects the local community. Co-opted members shall have the same voting rights as other Committee members.
- 7.10 The Committee shall meet at least 3 times per year and no more than 6 times per year; and two thirds of the Committee members (including at least two of the officers named in clause 7.14 ) shall constitute a quorum. The Committee may remove from the Committee any member who fails to attend 2 consecutive meetings without good reason.
- 7.11 The Committee may appoint groups to carry out specific roles or projects as it sees fit and shall co-opt such persons as necessary to enable any such group to perform its function.
- 7.12 Decisions of the Committee shall be by consensus or by a simple majority of those present. If required the Chair will have a casting vote.
- 7.13 The Committee shall record its proceedings which shall be publicly available.
- 7.14 The Committee will elect the following officers of the Forum from its number: Convenor, Co-Convenor, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officers including Media Officer as it sees fit. If the position of Convenor is held by a Southwark Resident, then the position of Co\_convenor shall be held by a Lewisham Resident and vice versa.
- 7.15.1 The Convenor of the Committee shall:
- (i) Chair meetings of the Committee and General Meetings of the membership;
  - (ii) Exercise a casting vote on elections and resolutions at meetings of the Forum and its Committee;
  - (iii) Take decisions on urgent matters between meetings of the Committee, which will be reported to the following meeting;
  - (iv) Provide leadership and motivation; and
  - (v) use her/his best efforts to ensure that the Committee is broadly representative of the residents and businesses in the Area, that the Neighbourhood Plan fairly reflects the views of residents and businesses in the Area, and that discussion is conducted courteously;

7.15.2 The Co-Convenor shall be the Convenor's alternate in their absence with all the duties and responsibilities of the Convenor during the former's absence or in the event of the Convenor's resignation.

7.15.3 The Treasurer shall:

- (i) Establish a bank account and act as a joint signatory on the account with either the Convenor or the Secretary ;
- (ii) Maintain the Forum's financial records;
- (iii) Set out a draft budget in the first year, and advise the Forum on staying within its budget;
- (iv) Prepare and present annual accounts at the Forum's Annual General Meeting;  
[and arrange an independent examination of the accounts if the turnover exceeds £5000;.
- (v) provide a financial update at each meeting of the Committee; and
- (vi) monitor expenditure.

7.15.4 The Secretary shall :

- (i) Call and organise meetings of Committee and General Meetings of the Forum including the annual general meeting ("AGM");
- (ii) Ensure the provision of a record of Forum meetings and make these publicly available;
- (iii) Maintain a register of Forum members at all times; and
- (iv) be responsible for correspondence ( including e-mail) with Forum members and outside organisations.

7.15.5 The Media Officer if appointed shall :

- (i) Maintain and update the Forum website;
- (ii) Prepare and present draft materials for the promotion of Forum through its organised events and activities, and for promotion in the Area; e.g. posters and leaflets;
- (iii) Communicate with the local media including, local papers;
- (iv) If appropriate, promote and advertise the Forum via social media; and
- (v) Prepare and e-mail to all Forum members at least 4 times a year a newsletter keeping members updated on the key issues under consideration and development of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

## **8. Meetings**

### **8.1 General Meetings**

8.1.1 The Forum shall hold General Meetings at least [twice] a year, the timing of which to be decided upon by the Committee;

8.1.2 [10] members or [one-third] of the membership if less, shall constitute a quorum for General Meetings;

8.1.3 all members shall be given at least 14 days' notice of the date of a General Meeting;

8.1.4 General Meetings of all members may be called within 28 days of receipt by the Secretary of a request in writing signed by no less than [20] members or [one-third of the membership if less], stating the purpose for which the meeting is required;

8.1.5 Voting at General Meetings shall be by a show of hands;

8.1.6 Individual members may vote at General Meetings. Affiliate Members are not voting members and are not entitled to stand for election as members of the Committee

8.1.7 A record of each decisions taken at every General Meeting, including the AGM, shall be produced by the Secretary and made publicly available;

8.1.8 The decision on the content of a proposed Neighbourhood Plan shall be subject to agreement at a General Meeting of the members.

### **8.2 Annual General Meetings:**

8.2.1 One of the Forum's General Meetings shall be its Annual General Meeting ("AGM") where the Committee will be elected.

8.2.2 The AGM shall be held on a day to be agreed by the Committee but not later than three months after the end of the Forum's financial year;

8.2.3 The business of the AGM shall include:

(i) a report from the Secretary on the activities of the Forum since the previous AGM and its plans for the forthcoming year;

(ii) a report from the Treasurer as to the financial position of the Forum;

(iii) consideration of and, if thought fit, approval of the accounts of the Forum for the previous financial year together with an independent examination of those accounts if the turnover exceeds £5,000 for the relevant year;

- (iv) appointment of an independent examiner to report to the following AGM on the accounts for the current financial year if the turnover is forecast to exceed £5,000 for the relevant year;
- (v) Election of not less than [5] and not more than [10] members of the Forum to become members of the Committee;
- (vi) consideration of any motion which has been submitted by at least 10 members of the Forum in time for circulation with the notice of the AGM; and
- (vii) any other business as required by the Constitution or as directed by the Committee.

8.3 The Secretary shall give all members at least 21 days' written notice of the time and place of the AGM together with an agenda;

8.4 Nominations for candidates seeking election to the Committee must be in writing, proposed and seconded by members of the Forum and countersigned by the candidate. Nominations must be received by the Secretary not less than 7 days prior to the date of the AGM.

8.5 Election of members of the Committee shall be by a show of hands.

8.6 A member shall be entitled to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf. Notice of appointment of a proxy must be received by the Secretary not less than 24 hours before the date of the AGM.

8.7 The AGM may, by a vote of not less than two-thirds of those members present, agree to consider any urgent or important business which has arisen since dispatch of the notice of the AGM.

8.8 Members must declare conflicts of interest and withdraw from discussion and voting on the issue in question.

## **9. Finance**

9.1 The Forum's accounting year shall run from April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

9.2 Accounting records shall be maintained for a period of six years. Following the winding up of the Forum records shall be kept for a period of two years. Records shall be available for inspection by any member on giving the Secretary not less than 10 days' written notice.

9.3 The Forum shall open and maintain a bank or other appropriate account in the name of the Forum which shall be controlled by a mandate requiring the signature of the Treasurer and the Secretary.

9.4 The Forum's accounts shall be made publicly available no later than three months after the

Forum's financial year end; and

- 9.5 The Forum may raise funds by donation, grants, or other means including loans, such funds to be used solely in furtherance of the Forum's objectives.

## **10. Constitution and Interpretation**

- 10.1 In the event of any question arising where the interpretation of this Constitution is in doubt or where it is silent, the Committee shall have the power to act according to its own interpretation and at its discretion.
- 10.2 Other than as may be required by law, amendments to this Constitution may only be made by a majority representing at least two-thirds of the members present and voting at a quorate General Meeting.

## **11. Term**

- 11.1 The duration of the Forum shall be for five years from the date of adoption of this Constitution unless it is previously wound up by resolution at a General Meeting or extended by resolution at a General Meeting.
- 11.2 In the event of dissolution of the Forum any remaining assets shall be distributed to the community organisations which remain members of the Forum at that date in such proportions as may be decided by the Committee, which shall retain responsibility for completing such distribution during the period of six months from the date of dissolution.