

Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

1. Introduction

1.1 The residents of Coulby Newham within Middlesbrough are seeking to establish a Neighbourhood Forum for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Area, which aligns with the Coulby Newham Ward boundary (see Appendix 1).

The aim:

The primary aim of the Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Forum is to consult the local community and to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for Coulby Newham, in order to make known to the local authority and other public bodies the views of local people on all matters affecting them.

1.2 The Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Forum will work collaboratively with the Council during the neighbourhood planning process, to ensure the development of comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan for the entirety of the Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Area and the Ward.

Objectives:

- *To produce the Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Localism Act 2011*
- *To promote and improve the economic, social, health and environmental well-being of the designated Neighbourhood Area for the benefit of the inhabitants of the immediate vicinity*
- *To promote conservation and appropriate uses of Public Open Space*
- *To provide opportunities for local people to influence local decision making;*
- *To encourage openness and transparency amongst statutory agencies and provide opportunities for local people to influence the priorities and services of these agencies;*
- *To work collaboratively with the Council; and,*
- *To improve democratic participation by local people.*

1.3 The Localism Act encourages local communities to set up a Neighbourhood Forum to lead the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Once agreed, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Local Plan for Middlesbrough and will be a key factor in making conservation and development decisions that will impact on future generations.

1.4 Part of the Council's role is to assist, and bring together local people to add value and achieve a better quality of life for the local community. In establishing a Neighbourhood Forum to facilitate the exercise of constructing a Neighbourhood Plan, it is hoped that this will be an appropriate vehicle for the delivery of these aims and objectives.

2. Forum name and the neighbourhood area

2.1 The name of the Forum shall be "Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Forum" herein after referred to as "the Forum".

2.2 The Neighbourhood Area referred to as the Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Area, for the purpose of this document, is shown in Appendix 1.

3. Forum membership

3.1 Membership of the Forum is open to individuals who:

- (a) live in the Neighbourhood Area
- (b) work in the Neighbourhood Area
- (c) are Coulby Newham Councillors in the Neighbourhood Area
- (d) own property in the Neighbourhood Area
- (e) are businesses in the Neighbourhood Area
- (f) represent local organisations operating in the Neighbourhood Area

3.2 Membership is voluntary.

3.3 The number of members shall be not less than 21.

3.4 For the avoidance of doubt, no person who qualifies under paragraph 3.1 above shall be excluded or refused membership from the Forum.

4. Forum administration

4.1 A quorum for a Forum Meeting shall be 5, which should include a minimum of 4 households, or 3 households plus either a business representative or ward councillor.

4.2 Membership is voluntary

4.3 New members may join by applying either verbally or in writing (including by email) to the Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Forum.

4.4 The decision on acceptance of individual membership applications is the responsibility of the Forum. Refusal to accept an application for membership must be given to the applicant by the Chairperson, or the Vice Chairperson, including the reason for refusal.

4.5 The Chair will conduct meetings and have the deciding vote in a deadlock situation

4.6 The Secretary will organise meetings, record and maintain the minutes of all meetings, making them available to all members; be responsible for all the correspondence appertaining to the business of the Forum and be responsible for upholding the constitution; manage the membership list

4.7 The Treasurer will keep accurate accounts of any finances

4.8 In the event of absence, another member may take the role of Chair.

4.9 The elected Council representatives will ensure that the views of the Forum are taken fully into account when the plan is considered by the Council.

4.10 Middlesbrough Council, as the Local Planning Authority, will ensure that the work of the Forum in relation to all mapping information falls within the scope of the License held by the Council from the Ordnance Survey.

5. Forum roles and responsibilities

5.1 The Chairperson will:

- be the chief presiding officer and chairperson for the Forum and meetings with a casting vote in any tie of votes only;
- have the power to take decisions on urgent matters between meetings of the Forum;
- provide leadership and motivation;
- enforce the Constitution and ensure meetings are conducted efficiently, fairly, and harmoniously.

5.2 The Secretary will:

- prepare and issue agendas, notes and reports for the Forum meetings;
- issue minutes for the Chairperson's approval prior to circulation;
- notify membership details to the Council's Community Partnerships Office
- report to the Forum on all related administrative matters in conjunction with the officers of the Council.
- act for the Forum in all communication and business with external organisations and individuals;

5.3 The Treasurer will:

- maintain and report on the financial accounts and insurance requirements of the Forum in conjunction with the Council's Community Partnership office;
- report to each meeting of the Forum the finance held by, or on behalf of, the Forum and funds uncommitted and available for use by the Forum.

6. Composition and meetings of the Forum Representatives

6.1 It may be necessary to establish working groups as required. The members of these groups will be members of the Forum, of the properly constituted residents groups and business groups in the area.

6.2 Meetings of any working group may also be attended by members of the Forum and any other properly constituted sub groups.

7. Affiliations, operations and independence:

7.1 The Forum shall not be affiliated to any political party or organisation.

7.2 All members of the Forum shall act in meetings of the Forum and any Representative Group(s) in the best interests of the Forum and shall follow the good governance guidelines set out in the attached guidance (or any updating thereof) <http://www.goodgovernancecode.org.uk/>

7.3 The Forum shall act in accordance with best practice in the preparation of neighbourhood plans and in accordance with Government guidance for such preparation and shall seek to work collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority to achieve this

7.4 The Forum is to make the plan in the first place and may comment on planning applications or proposals that could reasonably be expected to impact upon the objectives of the plan either before or after the plan is produced. Where such comments are made, they shall be submitted to the Council, following approval by the Chairperson of the Forum.

8. Location of meetings and frequency

8.1 The place of meeting for the Forum will be decided by the chairperson.

8.2 The Forum will meet at such frequency that is necessary to ensure preparation of the Plan is progressed in accordance with the timescale agreed with Middlesbrough Council.

9. Conflict resolution within the Forum

9.1 At all times, the Forum will recognise the primary need to encourage community involvement in, and support for, the Neighbourhood Plan.

9.2 If it proves not possible for the Forum to reach agreement during any stage of preparing the Plan, every effort shall be made by the membership of the Forum to resolve the difference by negotiation. Where this does not resolve the situation, the Forum will ensure that the alternative view is included in the relevant stage of community engagement, and the Forum will adopt the position of the majority response from the community arising from that stage.

10. Constitution Amendments

10.1 This Constitution shall become effective upon approval by the Forum.

10.2 Hereinafter, this Constitution may be amended at a meeting of the Forum by a two-thirds majority vote of those members present. Proposed amendments must be submitted with a seconder in writing at least twenty-one days before the meeting. Any proposed amendments by the Forum must be notified to Middlesbrough Council for approval.

11. Declaration

11.1 Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Forum hereby adopts and accepts this constitution as a current operating guide regulating the actions of members.

Signed: _____(Chair Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Forum.

Print Name: _____

Date: _____