



## **WOLVERCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM CONSTITUTION**

### **1. Aim**

The aim of the Forum is to bring together the views of people within the boundaries of Wolvercote Ward to influence the development of the area and their community.

### **2. Objective**

The Forum's objective is to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of Wolvercote Ward, primarily through the development and implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

### **3. The neighbourhood area ("the Area")**

The Neighbourhood Area is defined as the Wolvercote Ward of Oxford City in 2012.

### **4. Membership and Associate Membership**

4.1. The Forum must have a minimum of 21 signed up Members. A Member is here defined as anyone who lives or works in the Area.

4.2. The Forum membership must include one local Councillor. All City and County Councillors who represent the Area are invited to be Members whether or not they are otherwise eligible.

4.3. The aim is to ensure that Forum membership represents the population of the Area in terms of both geography and diversity.

4.4. Owners of businesses or land within the Area, if they are not residents, may nominate a representative to be an associate Member of the Forum. Associate Members may attend meetings and take part in discussions but shall not be entitled to vote or hold office.

### **5. Meetings**

5.1 Open public meetings of the Forum are to be held at least twice a year. A public meeting in the autumn will be designated as the AGM.

5.2 The AGM will be called with at least 2 weeks' notice by informing all residential properties in the Area, and all Members and associate Members.

5.3 The AGM has the power to both elect, and remove by a vote of no confidence, any member of the Forum Steering Committee.

5.4 At each AGM a written report will be given, the Treasurer will provide a set of audited accounts for the previous year and minutes of the proceedings will be taken.

5.5 Public meetings including the AGM will be publicised on notice boards and on the Forum website ([www.wolvercotenf.org.uk](http://www.wolvercotenf.org.uk)) and by any other suitable means.

5.6 An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called at the request of 10 or more Members of the Forum submitted in writing to the Chair or the Secretary. Not more than 1 week after the request is submitted, an EGM will be called giving two weeks' notice.

### **6 Voting**

6.1 Discussions will aim at consensus. If a vote is taken, voting will be restricted to Members, as defined above.

6.2 In referendums voting will be limited to Members and the voting age will be restricted in accordance with the Law.



## 7 Code of Conduct

Everyone is to be treated with respect and Members of the Forum will observe the seven principles of public life (see appendix).

## 8 Forum Steering Committee and officers

8.1 The Steering Committee (SC) exists to co-ordinate, implement and monitor the work of the Forum principally by developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Wolvercote Ward. It will prioritise, schedule and publicise the work of the Forum. SC members and officers will be elected at the first AGM of the Forum.

8.2 At the AGM Members shall elect the officers of the Form, namely the Forum Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary and Treasurer, and a maximum of seven Members, all to serve on the SC. Anyone living or working in the Area may stand for the SC and should be nominated and seconded by a Member or associate Member.

8.3 SC members are to be elected for a period of three years and may subsequently be re-elected, for further periods of two years.

8.4 The SC may co-opt a member of any local area group (see below) that is not already represented by an elected SC member. Local Ward Council representatives will be invited to attend meetings of the Steering Committee as non-voting Associate Members.

8.5 The SC may co-opt other Forum Members with specialist skills and may set up Working Groups of Forum Members for specific projects or tasks to be undertaken. Co-options will last until the next AGM when the Members may stand for election or may be re-co-opted by the new SC. Co-opted Committee members shall have the same voting rights as elected Members.

8.6 SC decision-making will aim at consensus. If a vote is taken, the Chair will have a second, casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

8.7 The quorum for meetings of the SC is five elected Members.

8.8 The SC has the power to expel a Committee member after a vote of no confidence by simple vote of all SC members.

## 9 Local area groups

9.1 The Forum will encourage and support the establishment of local groups to focus on the needs and wishes of constituent parts of the Area.

9.2 A local group must adopt the constitution of the Forum and share the principles of the Neighbourhood Plan.

9.3 A local group will include at least one elected or co-opted member of the Forum Steering Committee, who will report regularly to the SC.

9.4 Local groups must operate their finances through the Forum Treasurer.

## 10 Funds and winding up

10.1 Any assets of the Forum may not be used or disposed of except in a manner that the Forum considers benefits the Area.

10.2 Proceeds from the Forum's activities may only be used to benefit the Area. Payments directly to Members of the Forum are not to be considered such a benefit.

10.3 In the event of the winding up of the Forum or in any other circumstances where the Forum ceases to exist, its assets must be transferred to another body corporate that has similar objectives.

## 11 Liaison with other groups



11.1 The Forum will endeavour to liaise closely with existing groups in the Area and any other community groups that may be formed.

11.2 The Forum will endeavour to establish and maintain contact with other community groups or Forums that represent adjacent areas.

## 12 Changes to this Constitution

12.1 Changes to this constitution may be proposed by any Member of the Forum and should be seconded by 5 further Members and submitted in writing to the Forum Chair or Secretary 3 weeks before being considered at an AGM or EGM.

12.2 The Chair or Secretary will inform all SC members of proposed changes not less than 2 weeks before the meeting. The proposals will be available to Forum Members in writing one week in advance of the meeting.

12.3 This Constitution may be amended at a general meeting of the Forum by a two thirds majority vote of Members present.



## Appendix

### THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

#### SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### OPENNESS

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### HONESTY

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.