

# **Park Neighbourhood Planning Forum**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **1. Name:**

The Group shall be known as the **Park Neighbourhood Planning Forum** (hereafter known as the Group).

### **2. Objective:**

The objective for which the Group is formed is the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Park area of Hartlepool (hereafter called the Plan). The area to be covered within the Plan Boundary, as consulted upon and adopted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), is identified on the attached plan. It broadly includes the area south of Hart Lane, north of Summerhill Lane, east of the Rural Plan boundary and west of Granville Avenue. The boundary comprises the urban area of the Rural West ward (former Park ward) and a proportion of the Victoria ward in order to include the entirety of the conservation area. The Plan will be in general conformity with Hartlepool Borough Council's Local Development Framework (currently 2006 Local Plan).

This will be achieved by and include:

- Working in partnership with any statutory or voluntary body, to prepare, test and adopt a Neighbourhood Plan for the Park Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Encouraging good practice through effective performance management and consideration of case studies of other Neighbourhood Plans.
- Demonstrating a commitment to issues of diversity, equality of opportunity, social inclusion and sustainable development and be prepared to address these needs in areas where they arise.
- Consulting the community to ensure that the Plan is relevant to the needs and wishes of the community within the Plan boundary.

### **3. Aims:**

The aims of the Group are:

- (i) To develop and strengthen joint local partnership working with local statutory agencies; and
- (ii) To encourage involvement from all residents, the local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and all partners involved in this process.

#### 4. **Powers:**

The Group will have the following powers in pursuance of its objects; to:

- (i) Liaise and seek support from Hartlepool Borough Council Officers, (in particular the South and Central Neighbourhood Manager, Community Regeneration and Development, and Planning Services Teams), Elected Members, Government Officers or their representatives and other relevant experts in order to ensure the integrity of the Neighbourhood Planning process.
- (ii) Open and maintain a bank account in the name of the Park Neighbourhood Planning Forum.
- (iii) To co-opt new members as required.
- (iv) Determine and monitor the spending of any monies received for the purpose of developing and implementing the Plan.
- (v) Undertake consultation within the Plan area to determine the issues of importance to local residents.
- (vi) Decide on which of the issues identified by the community that the Plan will address and prioritise.
- (vii) Discuss and progress any other issues identified by residents as priorities for the Plan area.
- (viii) Produce such documents as are deemed necessary to forward the objects.
- (ix) Provide such training and development as is required by members of the Group in order to progress the Plan.
- (x) Retain the services of relevant experts in order to forward the objects.
- (xi) In partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council, undertake a referendum within the Plan area, once the draft Plan has been finalised and independently examined, and to publish the results.

**5. Membership:**

- (i) Membership of the Group must reflect the inclusivity, diversity and character of the Plan area and comprise at least 21 people (one person must live within the boundary of the Plan area, one person must work within the boundary of the Plan area, one person must be a Councillor for the Plan area).
- (ii) Members must be willing to give a commitment to attending regular meetings and training as required.
- (iii) Any resident who lives either inside or outside the boundary of the Plan area and whose actions or expertise benefit the Plan area can be co-opted as a member of the Group by agreement of the Group.
- (iv) A total of two elected representatives of Hartlepool Borough Council shall be invited to join the Group.

**6. Voting Members:**

Where a vote is needed:

- (i) Members as outlined in section 5 shall have one vote each.
- (ii) Local Authority Officers and specialist service providers commissioned by the Group shall not have a vote.

**7. Quorum:**

- (i) A minimum of 15 members of the Group must be present for a meeting to proceed.
- (ii) A minimum of 15 members with a voting right must be present to enable any decisions to be made during meetings.

**8. Meetings:**

- (i) During the development phase, meetings of the Group will be held on a monthly basis with at least ten meetings per year.
- (ii) Meetings shall last no longer than two hours unless all members agree to an extension of up to 30 minutes.
- (iii) All contributions to a meeting shall be addressed through the Chair of the meeting to ensure that there is only one person speaking at any

one time, and that everyone who wishes to speak has the chance to do so.

**9. Declarations of Interest:**

Any declarations of interest must be brought to the attention of the Chair at the beginning of each meeting.

**10. Role of members:**

All members of the Group must agree to undertake the following actions:

- (i) To act in the best interests of the Group, the residents and business community within the Plan area.
- (ii) To attend all appropriate meetings wherever possible.
- (iii) To take an active part in discussions and to contribute as best they can at meetings of the Group.
- (iv) To behave in a manner that is non-discriminatory and respectful of the views of others.
- (v) To understand and accept that the Group works for the benefit of all residents of the Plan area, irrespective of age, appearance, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or socio-economic group.
- (vi) To be responsible for decisions made by the Group or actions they have individually agreed to undertake.
- (vii) To take part in working groups as determined by the Group.
- (viii) To represent the views of the Group during external meetings or networks as appropriate.
- (ix) If possible, to engage with training opportunities to further develop skills and update knowledge throughout their period of membership.
- (x) To encourage all residents, wherever possible, to attend consultation events on a regular basis and take an active part in the decision-making process.
- (xi) To work with other partners and agencies, as appropriate.

- (xii) To ensure that all opportunities to maximise resources available to the group are taken, such as match funding, services etc.
- (xiii) To try to ensure that improvements for the area, identified in the Plan, are long-lasting and sustainable.

**11. Chair / Vice-Chair / Secretary / Treasurer:**

The Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Group shall be elected by the voting membership of the Group on an annual basis.

**12. Role of the Chair:**

- (i) To be involved in the setting of agenda's for meetings.
- (ii) To ensure the meeting is quorate.
- (iii) To ensure outstanding matters are followed up and are dealt with.
- (iv) To ensure that all relevant items on the agenda are discussed.
- (v) To ensure that all participants, who wish to do so, have an opportunity to make a contribution.
- (vi) To fairly summarise issues and options before a decision is made.
- (vii) To ensure that voting procedures are complied with.
- (viii) To clarify decisions made so that everyone is clear as to what has been decided and who is to take any action required as a result.
- (ix) To suspend any member whose behaviour or actions are deemed to be in breach of the member's role agreement as outlined above.
- (x) To act as a cheque signatory.

**13. Role of the Vice-Chair:**

- (i) To deputise for the Chair as required.
- (ii) To support the Chair and to ensure the work of the Group is effectively managed.
- (iii) To act as a cheque signatory.

**14. Role of the Secretary:**

- (i) To distribute agenda's, supporting papers and minutes of previous meetings.
- (ii) To arrange training, induction and other development events for the benefit of members.
- (iii) To encourage all residents within the Plan area to attend consultation events and to take an active part in the decision-making process.
- (iv) To maintain full and accurate records of all the Group's activities and meetings.

**15. Role of the Treasurer:**

- (i) To pay all invoices and expenses as required.
- (ii) To ensure that all monies received are banked within 5 working days of receipt.
- (iii) To maintain accurate records of all financial transactions.
- (iv) To provide a report on financial transactions to each meeting of the Group.
- (v) To make all financial records available on request to any member of the Group.
- (vi) To act as cheque signatory.

**16. Role of the Local Authority:**

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (General) published on 6 April 2012, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will:

- (i) Provide technical assistance, support and guidance to the Group.
- (ii) Arrange training, induction and other development events for the benefit of members.
- (iii) Formally publicise the proposed Neighbourhood Plan boundary and statement of suitability submitted by the Park Neighbourhood Planning Forum.

- (iv) To validate the Neighbourhood Plan before arranging an independent examination (to be undertaken by a suitably qualified individual) and neighbourhood referendum; and
- (v) Should a simple majority vote be gained at referendum, the LPA have a statutory obligation to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **17. Decision-making:**

The decision-making processes must be clear and understood by all.

- (i) Members of the Group will be responsible for any decisions relating to the spending of monies received, and for activities undertaken at their behest, for the purpose of developing the Plan.
- (ii) Decisions shall be based on information and advice given by partners, consultants or other experts; such information shall be provided in a timely manner, be accurate, factual and reliable, sufficient for the purpose, easy to understand and not full of jargon or acronyms.
- (iii) Where decisions are contentious, the Chair shall call for a vote; in such a case, decisions shall be made by a simple majority of voting members present at the meeting.
- (iv) Where a contended decision results in an equal number of votes both for and against, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

#### **18. Finance:**

- (i) A bank account shall be opened in the name of the Park Neighbourhood Planning Forum at such Bank as agreed by the members.
- (ii) Cheques shall be drawn up by the Treasurer, who will act as a signatory.
- (iii) A minimum of four persons shall be designated as cheque signatories, of whom two must be the Chair or Vice-Chair and treasurer.

#### **19. Closure:**

At any time following the formal adoption of the Plan, the Group may choose to wind up its activities; should such a decision be made by the members the following actions shall be taken:

- (i) Agreement shall be reached with Hartlepool Borough Council as to who will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Plan, (or its amendment or replacement in the future), as required.
- (ii) The Bank Account shall be closed and any monies remaining be returned to the relevant funding body if required or disseminated between similar groups as appropriate.