

Constitution for the Growing Together Area Neighbourhood Forum

Name

The name of the Forum shall be the Growing Together Area Neighbourhood Forum, hereinafter referred to as the 'Forum'.

Area covered

The Growing Together area covers the Growing Together Neighbourhood Area.

Purpose and Aims

The mission of the Forum shall be to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Area, by taking decisions and making recommendations concerning land use in the area that:

1. Respond to community priorities and aspirations identified through the ongoing consultation with the community undertaken by and on behalf of the Growing Together Community Partnership.
2. Work towards the production of a Neighbourhood Plan and neighbourhood development orders, as necessary, that contribute to the delivery and implementation of the Plan and the Growing Together Big Local Community Plan.
3. Work towards an increase in the effectiveness of public involvement in decision making and investment as it affects the quality of life in the Neighbourhood Planning Area.

Independence

The Forum will be independent of any party political, religious, trade or campaign organisation.

Membership

Membership of the Forum shall be open to any individual living or working in the designated area or is an elected Councillor for the area, without regard to age (after their 16th birthday), disability, political affiliation, religion or belief, ethnic identity, gender identity or sexual orientation who is interested in the physical development of the area and willing to abide by the Code of Conduct of the Forum.

The Forum will ensure that the membership is maintained at 21 members or above.

Membership shall be made up as follows:

- All members of the Growing Together Community Partnership, open to residents or proprietors of businesses based in the area. The Partnership has 15 members.
- The Youth Worker in the lead supporting role for the Growing Together Youth Forum.
- The Northampton Borough Councillors for Brookside, Talavera and Rectory Farm Wards
- Any future Northamptonshire County Councillors elected from a part of the area who are not also Northampton Borough Councillors

- Nominees of the Growing Together Advisory Group, consisting of Councillors and voluntary and public sector service providers working in the area, ensuring that the total number of members remains a minimum of 21.
- Any other person living or working in the area that the Forum decides to co-opt.

Meetings

The Forum will meet on a regular and continuous basis, and at least three times a year, to discuss issues and to take the decisions required to further the purpose of the Forum.

Meetings shall be held in public and notice given to the general public.

The quorum for a meeting to proceed will be six members of the Growing Together Community Partnership. A meeting or part of a meeting may be deferred or held informally if a quorum is present but the Chair rules that its discussions will not be adequately informed without other members being present.

Technical experts and promoters of development schemes, including developers, agents, consultants and city council officers, Councillors from adjacent wards and representatives of other organisations (eg. adjacent Neighbourhood Forums or Neighbourhood Planning Groups) may attend Forum meetings with the agreement of the Chair, Deputy Chair or Secretary to give information, advice and to set out options for action. They will not be able to take part in the Forum's decision-making.

Decision Making

The Forum will use best endeavours to make decisions that are based upon a reasonable understanding of the informed choices of the wider community, as measured by ongoing engagement with the wider public outlined in the Growing Together Communications Strategy.

Formal decisions shall be taken by a show of hands and carried by a simple majority, providing that a simple majority of Community Partnership members present have voted in favour.

Declaration of Interests

Individual members of the Forum have a duty and are required to declare in advance any financial, party political, employment, land ownership or other organisation interest that has a bearing on the work of the Forum in general or an agenda item in particular. Such interests will be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting. The interest that residents have in the general betterment of the area does not need to be declared or recorded.

Training and Development of the Forum

Members of the Forum will make every effort to take up opportunities for training or learning about any aspect relevant to the Forum's work.

Officers of the Forum

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Community Partnership shall be the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Forum on an *ex officio* basis.

The Chair shall appoint a Secretary to the Forum, who may be a paid employee of one of the Forum's partner organisations.

BGN (Blackthorn Good Neighbours), as the Locally Trusted Organisation for the Growing Together Big Local programme, shall hold any monies awarded or allocated to the Forum and account to the Forum for their expenditure in accordance with the decisions of the Forum.

Working Groups

The Forum may appoint establish such standing or *ad hoc* working groups as it considers necessary to carryout work on its behalf, according to the Terms of Reference set out for them by the Forum at the time. Any expenditure made by a working group will need to be authorised by the Forum.

Wider Community Involvement

The Forum will publicise its work to the wider community according to the Growing Together Communications Strategy.

The Forum shall take reasonable steps to consult those members of the public directly affected by any proposal under consideration, whether or not they are residents of the Growing Together area.

The Forum will use reasonable endeavours to base its actions upon the views and informed choices of the wider community.

Complaints and Grievance

Any complaint or grievance about the behaviour of a member or supporting officer in respect of their work for the Forum shall be made in writing to the Chair of the Forum. The Chair and Deputy Chair will investigate the complaint or grievance and decide on action in line with the Code of Conduct. If the complaint or grievance concerns the Chair or Deputy Chair, then other members of the Forum will be appointed by the Forum in their place.

Changes to the Constitution

This constitution may be altered and additional clauses may be added at any meeting of the Forum, subject to the support of two-thirds of its members, of whom two-thirds must be members of the Growing Together Community Partnership.

Equality

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

Dissolution of the Forum

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; and all outstanding debts treated in line with the relevant policies and procedures. No individual member of the Forum shall benefit from the dispersal.