

Area Forum Development
Appendix B – Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

1.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

The council may appoint neighbourhood forums as it sees fit, if it is satisfied that to do so they will ensure improved service delivery in the context of best value and more efficient, transparent and accountable decision making.

2.0 PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of the neighbourhood forum is to provide an open forum in which to discuss local concerns and issues, prioritise areas for action and produce a neighbourhood plan. They also act as a forum for the council and its partners to consult and receive feedback on policy, services and issues of local concern. The council recognises the role of the forums in guiding, prioritising, and scrutinising service delivery in their areas.

2.2 The neighbourhood forum is not a substitute for elected member surgeries and as such will not be able to deal with individual cases or concerns, although members of the public are welcome to attend and their views valued.

3.0 COMPOSITION AND FUNCTION

3.1 There are 11 area forums; each is made up of two wards and are listed below:

Bebington and Clatterbridge: Comprising Bebington and Clatterbridge wards

Bidston and Claughton: Comprising Bidston & St James and Claughton wards

Birkenhead and Tranmere & Rock Ferry: Comprising Birkenhead and Tranmere & Rock Ferry Wards

Bromborough, Eastham and New Ferry: Comprising Bromborough and Eastham wards

Greasby, Frankby, Irby, Upton and Woodchurch: Comprising Greasby, Frankby, Irby & Upton wards

Heswall, Pensby and Thingwall: Comprising Heswall Pensby & Thingwall wards

Leasowe, Moreton and Saughall Massie: Comprising Leasowe & Moreton East and Moreton West & Saughall Massie wards

Liscard and Seacombe: Comprising Liscard and Seacombe wards

New Brighton and Wallasey: Comprising New Brighton and Wallasey wards

Oxton and Prenton: Comprising Oxton and Prenton wards

West Wirral: Comprising Hoylake and Meols, West Kirby and Thurstaston wards

It should be noted here that it is proposed to change the name of two Forum areas, namely adding the community of New Ferry to the name of the current 'Bromborough and Eastham' forum and the community of Woodchurch on to the 'Greasby, Frankby, Irby and Upton' forum.

4.0 FORUM MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 All forums have the same basic membership. They are made up of ward councillors within the neighbourhood forum, representatives of partner organisations and council officers; however the membership is not restrictive and can be subject to change.
- 4.2 The partner organisations are Merseyside Police, Wirral Primary Care Trust, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Merseytravel, Wirral Youth Parliament and Wirral Older Peoples Parliament. This list is not exhaustive and other partner organisations can be included with approval from the forum chair.
- 4.3 As each neighbourhood forum is primarily consultative and advisory and does not at present exercise delegated powers and budgets there is no requirement for political balance.
- 4.4 Accordingly, membership will include all ward councillors for the relevant areas. Any decision-making lies with the elected ward members although if a decision needed to be made at the neighbourhood forum in the event of an equality of votes, the chair will have a second, or casting vote. Members can, at their discretion, extend voting rights to include Community Representatives.
- 4.5 The chair of each individual forum will be one of the elected members from the Wards. How the position of chair is decided upon is a matter for the members to decide in each individual forum.
- 4.6 Any member of the community can put themselves forward as a 'Community Rep' for their local area. Elections for this role will be held every three years. This role consists of attending the Forum meetings and working alongside other members of the Forum and other community organisations to promote Forum business.
- 4.7 A member of the cabinet may serve on the relevant area forum for his / her ward.

5.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the 11 neighbourhood forums are as follows:

- To reflect its consultative role, have an advisory capacity. Submit reports on matters of concern locally to the cabinet or overview and scrutiny committee, as the forums deems necessary.

- To increase openness and transparency in the council's working and decision-making and improve co-ordination at a local level.
- Seek to inform and engage the widest possible range of local residents and businesses in the work of neighbourhood forums.
- To oversee and contribute to the development of neighbourhood plans which reflect the needs and priorities of the area;
- Look at issues concerning all aspects of community life within the neighbourhood, including focuses on specific issues as suggested by Council officers, elected members and the community
- To provide public bodies and partners with an opportunity to consult with local people on the development and delivery of plans, programmes and services
- To build and develop local partnerships to tackle and deliver solutions to the priorities identified within neighbourhood plans, including those plans that directly link to the Corporate Plan.
- To make recommendations to Cabinet in respect of the expenditure of any funds allocated to them.

6.0 DELEGATIONS

Forums may only exercise such delegation as may from time to time be agreed by the Council.

7.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

7.1 Neighbourhood forums will comply with the access to information rules in part four of the Council's Constitution and in particular will ensure:

- Meetings of the neighbourhood forum are held in public, in a venue in the local area that is both suitable and accessible for members of the public to attend;
- A period of 30 minutes is allocated for questions by members of the public at each meeting;
- Questions to be put to the Community Engagement Team at least 48 hours before the start of the meeting will receive a full response from the forum;
- The council will make copies of the agenda and any reports open to the public available for public inspection at least one week before the meeting. In particular, members of the public will be able to view details of the meetings on the council's internet site and at all public information points i.e. libraries and one stop shops