

Soho and Handsworth

Soho & Handsworth Neighbourhood Planning Forum

YES

This is an application for the designation of the emerging Soho & Handsworth Neighbourhood Planning Forum (hereby referred to as the Forum), which is a qualifying body for the purposes of the Localism Act 2011. This application for designation is being initiated by the current Forum pre-steering group.

The proposal for the Forum emanated from the exploratory discussions between residents, business owners, community groups, and other stakeholders. It has been in development for almost two years, led by a pre-steering group consisting of members of the residential and business community, local councillors and other local stakeholders.

We are now seeking formal Neighbourhood Forum designation in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012). The content of this application fulfils the requirements of the Regulations and clearly highlights the extent of the proposed Neighbourhood Area and the emerging Forum's desire to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Forum has been created for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Area. The Forum is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and has a written constitution (Appendix 2).

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neighbourhood, promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of Soho and Handsworth in a manner that reflects the diversity, character and inclusivity of the area and includes a variety of people who live and work in the area.

The Forum meets the conditions contained in section 61F(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as required by the Regulations as follows:

- It seeks to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the proposed Neighbourhood Area (see Object 2 in the Constitution).

- Its membership (Constitution Clause 4) is open to:

i) Individuals who live in the Neighbourhood Area;

ii) Individuals who work in the Neighbourhood Area;

iii) Elected representatives of Birmingham City Council or Members of Parliament whose wards/constituencies fall into the Neighbourhood Area who shall be ex officio members.

As per Clause 5 of the constitution, The Forum will vote on the adoption of the written constitution and on the election of officers to form an Executive Committee at their first General Meeting. The Executive Committee, once elected, will amongst other matters, manage the finances of the Forum.

Forum members have been recruited through information circulated to households and local businesses through community organisations, through the local press, social media and at events held in a variety of online and in person settings. The community events have been extensive and targeted to engage all communities in the neighbourhood.

A detailed summary of consultation events is also attached herewith under Appendix 4.

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The emerging Forum intends to sustain a long-term residential population and embraces the needs of a diverse community. Soho and Handsworth are urban areas with a diverse and engaged population. There are community challenges as well as community aspirations. The creation of the Forum represents the increased cohesiveness of the neighbouring wards of Soho, Jewellery Quarter, Handsworth, Holyhead and Lozells.

The Forum will focus on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan which will enable community involvement in how this takes place and will help ensure development contributes to a sustainable and vibrant neighbourhood. As well as working to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, the Forum initially intends to establish working groups to explore key community issues as guided by Forum members.



The Neighbourhood Plan Area is a key feature of a Neighbourhood Planning Forum. In order to develop the right Area we undertook multiple rounds of consultations with community stakeholders. Here, we sought to understand the balance of administrative and community boundaries through an inclusive and interactive consultation methodology. After extensive boundary related consultation (see Consultation Summary in Appendix 4) - the proposed boundary for the Forum includes a mixture of administrative boundaries (e.g. wards) and community boundaries (e.g. local landmarks). For instance, during consultation events, the A41, Soho Road was mentioned in three consultations as the heart of the neighbourhood running through the centre of the proposed area with Handsworth Ward and the Soho section of Soho and Jewellery Quarter Ward. This consistent input meant that we recognised that the boundary would cross over two administrative boundaries to ensure that the Soho Road remained central. Furthermore, there are two local centres in the proposed boundary, including Soho Road and Rookery Road as well as two major parks in the area, including Handsworth Park and Gib Heath Park. Through consultation with the local community a number of development sites were highlighted, namely Bill House, which is on the eastern boundary of the proposed Forum. Alongside this there are a range of community organisations, buildings and faith organisations. The extent of the proposed Neighbourhood Area boundary has been in development for over 18 months, led by a pre-steering group of members across membership categories.

The administrative boundary features of the area are described below:

- Westward side of Soho and Jewellery Quarter Ward which follows along the tram line but does not encroach on the Jewellery Quarter.
- The entirety of Handsworth Ward.
- A small area of Lozells Ward which faces onto the Soho Hill area.
- A very small area of Holyhead Ward following the Soho BID boundary which includes a place of worship, a school, and a few local shops.

Appendix A highlights the proposed Neighbourhood Area, marked by a blue line.

The Neighbourhood Area has been developed alongside residents, businesses, community organisations, faith groups and other local stakeholders. The boundary was determined through a structured, participatory process as described below:

- 1) Step 1 involved community stakeholders identifying areas of importance on a large map of the local area. By placing stickers on a large map, community members could begin to identify their hyperlocal area of focus, thereby starting to create the neighbourhood area.
- 2) Step 2 involved community stakeholders drawing boundaries on smaller maps which demonstrated administrative boundaries so as to include their perception of the local neighbourhood. These results were diverse but consensus was gained through group discussion and a recognition of the difference between lived and administrative boundaries.
- 3) Step 3 involved community stakeholders further refining a draft boundary through our final boundary consultations.

Within the consultations there emerged two areas of contention: 'the Triangle' a portion of Handsworth Wood Ward bordering Handsworth Ward as well as the area around 'Crick Gardens' which falls into Birchfield Ward but borders Handsworth Ward. These discussions were resolved in liaison between elected representatives and residents. It was recognised that 'the Triangle' would



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