

Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

Making Bermondsey Better

Name and Area

1. The name of the group shall be 'Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum'.
2. The Area shall be decided by the Forum from time to time or as adjusted by the London Borough of Southwark under its statutory powers.

Neighbourhood Forum Structure

3. Membership of the Forum shall be open to all residents living in the Area and all businesses operating in the area and all people wanting to live in the Area.
4. Properly constituted residents and business groups in the area (listed in Annex A) shall be members of the Representatives Group and shall appoint one individual (and alternates), who shall also be members of the Forum, to represent them at each Representative Group Meeting.
5. The Representative Group Meetings will elect, and if necessary dismiss, the members of a Steering Group which will manage the Forum. The Representatives Group will scrutinise the work of the Steering Group and will have the right to amend the constitution.

Composition and Meetings of the Forum Steering Group and the Neighbourhood Forum Representatives Group

6. The initial Steering Group shall comprise up to 12 people, all members of the Forum, who shall volunteer and be elected by the Representatives Group. If there are more than 12 volunteers, elections shall be held at the first meeting of the Representatives Group and the 12 volunteers receiving the most votes shall form the Steering Group.
7. The Steering Group shall elect its own officers (including a Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary) and shall meet as often as is necessary to steer the plan making process and such other purposes the Representatives Group shall determine. If vacancies occur the Steering Group can co-opt new members subject to the endorsement of the Representatives Group at the next meeting. [Elected Southwark councillors will not be eligible for membership of the Steering Group]

8. The Representatives Group shall comprise representatives, who shall all be members of the Forum, of the properly constituted residents groups (including schools and churches) and business groups in the area.
9. Meetings of the Representatives Group may also be attended by all members of the Steering Group and any other properly constituted sub groups of the Steering Group (which may include people co-opted on to those groups) plus representatives of Guys Hospital and Kings College, Team London Bridge, Network Rail, Transport for London, LB Southwark, the Greater London Authority and the Department of Communities and Local Government (but none of which shall have a vote). The Representatives Group shall meet monthly or as it otherwise decides and will provide guidance to the Steering Group on key decisions. The meeting shall elect a chair who shall also be allowed to invite observers.

Purpose

10. The purpose of the Forum shall be:

‘to produce a Neighbourhood Plan to further the social, economic and environmental well-being of individuals living, or wanting to live, in the area of Bermondsey shown on the attached plan (or as amended by agreement with the local authority)’ and such other purposes as the Representatives Group may from time to time decide.

Affiliations, Operations and Independence

11. ‘Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum’ shall not be affiliated to any political party or organisation.
12. The Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum is to make the plan in the first place and therefore, at least until the plan is made, shall not express any views on any particular planning application (other than those it makes itself) prior to the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan. Individual Forum Members can comment on planning applications but not in the name of the Forum.
13. All members of the Forum shall act in meetings of the Forum, the Representative Group and the Steering Group in the best interests of the Forum and the residents of the area and shall follow the good governance guidelines set out in the attached guidance (or any updating thereof).<http://www.goodgovernancecode.org.uk/>
14. The Forum shall act in accordance with best practice in the preparation of neighbourhood plans and in accordance with Government guidance for such preparation and shall seek to work collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority to achieve this.

Membership

15. Membership shall be open to all who support the purpose of the ‘Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum’ and who give their contact details to the Membership Secretary of the steering group and who allow these details to be used for the purposes of the Forum.

Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum Representative Group Meetings

16. At least 7 days notification must be given to its members for a Representative Group Meeting.
17. The Representative Group Meeting may:
 - i. Receive and comment on the report from the steering group
 - ii. confirm the identity of the community organisations entitled to attend the Representatives Group
 - iii. approve the annual report and accounts where relevant
 - iv. adopt constitutional amendments.
18. At least 5% of the membership must be present at the start of the Representative Group Meeting for it to be declared quorate. The meeting shall be chaired by a person it elects from amongst its members.
19. All Representative Group members shall be entitled to attend the Representative Group Meeting to propose and vote for motions and to stand for election. Voting shall be by a show of hands.
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Steering Group

21. The Steering Group will undertake its work as it sees fit and may delegate powers on specific matters to such persons as it sees fit.
22. The Chair of the Steering Group, shall:
 - i. call and chair regular meetings of the Steering Group (for which a quorum will be one half of its members) and have a casting vote on elections and resolutions
 - ii. act on behalf of the 'Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum' and represent it externally
 - iii. have the power to take decisions on urgent matters between meetings of the Steering Group
 - iv. interpret the constitution. The Chairs' interpretation may be overturned by two-thirds of those present at the Steering Group or at Representative Group Meetings
 - v. act as joint signatory on the 'Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum' bank account.
23. The Treasurer, shall:
 - vi. be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the 'Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum'
 - vii. be responsible for presenting a budget, annually for the following year to a Representatives Group Meeting
 - viii. submit a detailed summary of the accounts at every Steering group Meeting
 - ix. act as a joint signatory on the 'Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum' account
 - x. take the chair at meetings if the Chair and Secretary are absent
 - xi. take the minutes if the Secretary is absent or in the chair.

24. The Secretary shall:

- xii. be responsible for organising meetings, maintaining the minutes and Constitution of the Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum and making them available to members
- xiii. take the chair at meetings if the Chair is absent
- xiv. act as joint signatory on the 'Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum' account

25. The cheques or other financial transactions of the Forum must require two signatories.

Constitutional Amendments

26. Constitutional amendments shall require a majority (other than to comply with the law) at a Representatives Group Meeting.

27. The Constitution shall be reviewed within two months of the Localism Act receiving Royal Assent.

Distribution of Wind-Up

28. A majority of the members of the Representatives Group shall decide the distribution of any money in the event of a wind-up. Any assets / money remaining shall go to local community-based organisations.