

Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Planning Forum

Constitution

1. Name

The name of the Forum shall be the Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Planning Forum hereafter to be referred to as the Baltic Forum.

2. Area of Benefit

The area in which the Forum will pursue its objects is the Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Area, which is agreed as a designated business area by Liverpool City Council for which the Forum will produce a Neighbourhood Plan. Designation as a business area introduces the requirement for a second referendum for business rate-payers.

3. Objects

The purpose of the Baltic Forum is

- 3.1. To prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Baltic Triangle area;
- 3.2. To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Baltic Triangle area;
- 3.3. To improve the area for the benefit of individuals living or working within the Baltic Triangle area and for local business and community organisations operating in the Baltic Triangle area;
- 3.4. To ensure that the character of the Baltic Triangle area as a historic industrial area defined by ingenuity, creativity, making and production is enhanced, protected and not displaced by development in the Baltic Triangle area;
- 3.5. To ensure that development in the Baltic Triangle area is adaptable for future needs, balanced and appropriate in terms of usage mix in order to secure the long term sustainable growth of the Baltic Triangle area;
- 3.6. To champion the design quality of, and materials used in, new development in the Baltic Triangle area;
- 3.7. To encourage goodwill and support the involvement of the wider community;
- 3.8. To foster, mobilise and engage community spirit and encourage civic pride.

4. Powers

In furtherance of its objects the Baltic Forum may

- 4.1. Search for, invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Forum, and to open bank account(s) to manage such funds;
- 4.2. Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars etc.;
- 4.3. Develop partnerships with local organisations with a stake in the Baltic Triangle area and groups of a similar nature to the Forum and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations;
- 4.4. Employ staff and volunteers, and commissions consultants, as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the objects of the Forum;
- 4.5. Take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objects of the

Forum, including taking out any contracts that it may see fit.

5. Membership

- 5.1. Forum Membership shall be open to anyone who has an interest in assisting the Forum to achieve its aim and is willing to adhere to the objects and constitution of the Forum and are eligible to join:
- 5.2. Eligibility
 - 5.2.1. An Individual who's permanent home address is in the Neighbourhood Area (example of proof would be a payment of council tax on a discreet property);
 - 5.2.2. An Individual with a genuine business interest in the area i.e. someone who owns or is employed by a business carrying out activities from a physical base in the Baltic Triangle area or (example of proof would be a registered business address or established pattern of business activity and pattern of paying rent). In the case of the business interest being that of a business that owns property in the Baltic Triangle area, membership will be limited to one member regardless of the number of properties owned in the area or the type of business organisation. The member should be chosen from staff of that organisation and should preferably have an appropriate role in that organisation e.g. community outreach officer or director.
 - 5.2.3. An individual active at a social institution or organisation based in the Baltic triangle but who is not necessarily paid e.g. a volunteer worker or carer.
 - 5.2.4. Local elected members of Liverpool City Council representing Riverside Ward, which covers the whole of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 5.3. Before granting membership to a new member proof of eligibility should be provided to and confirmed by the Membership Secretary.
- 5.4. The Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Forum will comprise at least 21 individuals.
- 5.5. The Forum will aim for as wide a representation of individuals and communities in the Neighbourhood Area as possible irrespective of age, sex, ethnicity, ability, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation.
- 5.6. Member's rights and duties: Members have the right to vote at progress meetings, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and any Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). Members may resign from the Forum by doing so in writing to the Membership Secretary. Members have the Duty to attend the AGM or send apologies to the secretary in the case of a reasonable reason not to attend.
- 5.7. The management committee has the power to terminate or suspend the membership of any member if they are considered to be acting against the objects of the Baltic Forum as laid out in this constitution.
- 5.8. Delegated decisions for management team:
 - Project planning.
 - Developing and running community and stakeholder engagement and consultation programme.
 - Building the evidence base.

- Commissioning consultants and specialist technical reports.
- Coordinating the working groups.
- Applying for grants and other support.
- Other activities to develop the Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Working Arrangements

6.1 POSITIONS

6.1.1. The Forum will be lead by a management committee consisting of the following official positions:

- 2 co-chairs
- Treasurer
- Minute Secretary
- Membership Secretary
- Up to three other ordinary members

6.1.2. The Forum will have 2 co-chairs to share workload and manage availability for meetings.

6.1.3. Official positions will be elected at an AGM by simple majority.

6.1.4. Once elected, the officer will remain in place until the next AGM.

6.1.5. Elections will be announced three weeks before the AGM by the Membership Secretary. Anyone wishing to stand for election must express interest to the secretary 2 weeks before the AGM. The secretary will then issue the list of candidates to the members group 1 week prior to the AGM. The Membership Secretary will issue election notices via group email to the Forum members list. The elections will take place by raising of hands at the AGM.

6.1.6. If an officer resigns mid-post and it is necessary for them to be replaced before an AGM is held, the co-chair persons have the power to co-opt a member of the Forum as an interim replacement until they can stand for election.

6.2 WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSOURCING OF WORK

6.2.1. The Forum may create working groups to delegate defined parts of the work to certain groups of members. The purpose of and powers delegated to the working group will be defined at a progress meeting, AGM or EGM and voted into action by simple majority show of hands.

6.2.2. Each working group will have a leader who must be elected by the Forum in the same way as officer elections though these may take place at progress meetings and EGMs as well as the AGM.

6.2.3. The management committee and the leader of the working group may select other members or non-members wishing to join the working group to work with them.

6.2.4. Any commissioned consultancy work will be assessed by the management committee and then circulated to the membership once deemed suitable.

6.2.5. Working groups have no executive decision making powers.

6.3 MEETINGS

There will be a maximum of 4 progress meetings per year, one of which will be incorporated within the AGM. The AGM will have the following fixed agenda items:

1. Chairperson's report
2. Treasurer's report,
3. Other working group reports,
4. Election of members to the management group,

Any Other Business (AOB) that has been notified to the management committee with 3 days notice prior to the meeting will be considered and noted but not necessarily tabled as an agenda item.

6.3.1. Co-chairs will take it in turns to chair each meeting. In the event of both being unable to attend a meeting the Forum will elect a stand-in from those members present by a simple majority show of hands.

6.3.2. Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM): Procedure for calling an EGM: The co-chairs may call an EGM at any time. The precise agenda for an EGM should be notified to members in advance and that the EGM will be for consideration of that item(s) only. A group of minimum 15 Forum Members may request the co-chair call an EGM. All procedures for an EGM are to be the same as per an AGM except the fixed agenda items excluding A.O.B.

6.3.3. Notice of meetings is to be given by the Membership Secretary via email to the Forum Member list at least 2 weeks in advance of progress meetings and AGMs and 1 week in advance of an EGM.

6.4 DECISIONS

6.4.1. The forum's role is to take an overview, hold the management team to account and ratify its decisions. Key decisions for the Forum at different stages of the process would include:

- Agree constitution, elect officers, agree submission of Neighbourhood Forum for designation.
- Set aims and key policy themes for the plan
- Agree draft plan and format for pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation.
- Consider representations and modifications arising from Regulation 14 consultation and agree final draft plan for submission.

6.4.2. A Quorum of 1/3rd of the Forum membership and minimum 11 Forum members is required to make decisions by voting in all progress meetings and at the AGM. At an EGM a Quorum of 1/3rd of the Forum membership and minimum 15 people is required.

6.4.3. The procedure for voting is as follows: Only Forum members may vote, by show of hands, simple majority wins, chair has casting vote in event of tie.

6.4.4. The Co-chair who will chair the upcoming meeting is responsible for compiling an agenda of business for the meeting. They will propose a draft agenda in an email notice of the upcoming meeting. Members may propose additional or alternative items for the agenda and the chair can choose how these are taken into account.

6.4.5. Minutes will be distributed before the next meeting, and at that meeting approved and signed.

6.5 FINANCE

6.5.1 Bank Accounts

The Forum will have two bank accounts; one current account and one holding account. Any money acquired by the Forum, including donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into one or other of these bank accounts in the name of the Forum. All funds shall be applied to the furtherance of the objects of the Forum and for no other purpose. The Treasurer plus two other members of the management committee will act as signatories to the bank accounts. The Forum will allow internet banking methods.

6.5.2 Financial records

The Treasurer will be accountable for maintaining records of income and expenditure. Accounts shall be kept and will be examined annually by an independent person with adequate financial expertise who is not a member of the Forum. The Treasurer will present an annual financial report to the membership at the AGM and intermittent reports to the Management Group upon request. The accounting year of the Forum shall run from 01 April to 31 March.

6.5.3 Payments

Any expenditure by the Forum shall be authorised or signed by the treasurer and at least one of the following Management Group members: Co-Chairs; Minute Secretary or Membership Secretary.

6.5.4 Expenses

The definition of expenses for the purposes of this constitution is: 'Reimbursement for financial outlay by a member on behalf of the Forum while carrying out its objectives'. Expenses requirements must be raised with the management committee and agreed in advance by the Treasurer plus one other of management committee in advance, in writing. Any expenses will require the submission of receipts (except in the case of a mileage claim which will be repaid at the rate of 50p per mile)

6.6 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

6.6.1. A conflict of interest is defined for the purposes of this Forum as 'when a member of the Forum has a financial interest in or stands to gain or lose financially from any contract, transaction or other agreement entered into by the organisation or its governing body.' A conflict of interest also applies if the above is true for a person closely connected to the member such as their spouse, child, business partner or any body in which they have a stake such as an employee of a company affected by a specific issue.

6.6.2. Members must declare any conflicts of interest at the first meeting (progress meeting, AGM or EGM) where the contract or other arrangement is first discussed and recorded in the minutes by the Minute Secretary. If the member does not initially have a conflict of interest but subsequently does it must be declared in writing to the secretary who will note the interest as an item in the agenda of the next meeting.

6.6.3. Members are to abstain from voting in case of conflict of interest

6.6.4. To avoid conflicts of interest undermining the credibility of the Forum, no member can receive more than £500 per tender.

6.7 OFFICER DUTIES

Co-chairs' duties

- Make sure the plan itself follows the correct statutory procedures.
- ensure that the requirements and procedures set out in the constitution are followed
- ensure that meetings are properly convened and proper notice has been given
- ensure that the rules relating to Quorum are followed
- take the business in the order set out in the notice of the meeting or the agenda unless a majority of members present agree that the order can be changed

- ensure that no business is transacted unless it is within the scope of the notice which has been given.
- Ensure that when discussing any matter, the members keep their remarks to that piece of business
- Clearly state resolutions, ensure that voting or other decisions making is properly carried out and only people authorised to vote take part in decisions, and declare the results of decisions.
- Keep order
- Ensure that the meeting is minuted and any decisions recorded
- Ensure that there is a clear end to the meeting
- The chairperson has the right to insist that a disorderly or abusive person leaves the meeting.

Minute Secretary's duties

- Take minutes of the meeting
- Circulate to the membership within 1 week following the meeting for approval.

Minutes are a written record of the business carried out at meetings and shall include:

- Name of organisation
- Description of the meeting (AGM, Progress meeting, EGM, meeting of working group)
- Date (including year) of the meeting
- Place of meeting
- List of members present, but for large meetings (over 30 people) it is sufficient to indicate the number of members present.
- List of others 'in attendance' (optional for large meetings)
- Who chaired and took minutes
- Apologies for absence
- Corrections (if any) to the minutes of the previous meeting
- Acceptance and signing of the (corrected) minutes from the previous meeting
- Matters arising from the previous minutes
- A separate minute for each item covered at this meeting covering the important points of the discussion, details of any document, report or advice relied upon in reaching a decision, any decisions, who will take action to implement a decision and by when.
- Date, time and place of next meeting

Membership Secretary's duties

- Keep an up to date Forum membership list with contact details
- Administer the recruitment, and resignation of members including and induction of new members and confirmation of proof of eligibility to join.
- Take reasonable steps to secure at least one, but preferably more, members from each of the eligibility criteria groups and promote diversity of membership generally.
- Give notice of elections and candidates to the membership.
- Give notice of meetings to the membership.
- Act as the networker for the Forum by keeping a list of contact details of interested parties and useful connections.

Treasurer's duties

- Ensure that record-keeping and accounts are kept in order

- Provide regular updates on the organisation's financial position and present accounts at the AGM
- Arrange annual examination of accounts by an independent person.
- Open and manage bank accounts in the Forum's name
- Set up appropriate systems for book-keeping, payments, lodgements & petty cash and keep safe the Forum's banking artifacts (cheque book, statements and letters...)
- Receive, and act upon any banking correspondence
- Ensure that appropriate financial systems and controls are in place
- Advise on the organisation's fundraising strategy and estimate funding requirements for activities that need funding.
- Ensure use of funds complies with conditions set by funding bodies
- Ensure everyone handling money keeps proper records and documentation.

7. A Neighbourhood plan – the process

- 7.1. Produce a project programme of work with key milestones
- 7.2. Conduct a programme of publicity and awareness raising that a neighbourhood plan is being proposed
- 7.3. Conduct early community engagement to identify key issues and themes to inform the visions and aims of the plan.
- 7.4. Conduct on-going engagement to explore specific issues in more depth including a review of any existing evidence base and identification and development of any further evidence needed to help develop the detail of an emerging plan.
- 7.5. Produce a draft plan by transforming the aims, visions and evidence base into policies and proposals.
- 7.6. Produce a summary version of the draft plan and conduct pre-submission consultation (regulation 14).
- 7.7. Discuss the draft plan with the local planning authority about whether it meets the basic conditions for neighbourhood plans.
- 7.8. Incorporate any amendments necessary from pre-submission consultation.
- 7.9. Submit to the local planning authority with supporting statements for checking the proper legal processes have been carried out and refer it to an independent examiner to check whether the basic conditions set out by law have been met.
- 7.10. The local authority is then responsible for putting the neighbourhood plan to referendums.

9. Dissolution

The Forum may be wound up by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at an AGM or EGM. Any money or property remaining after payment of debts must be given to an organisation with similar (charitable) purposes.

10. Duration

The duration of the Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Planning Forum is 5 years from the 14th August 2015. The Localism Act 2011 sets out a 5 year life span for the Forum. It could continue in a different guise after this time, but it would cease to be the neighbourhood planning body.

This Constitution was adopted at an AGM held on _____

at _____

Signed,