

Harehills Neighbourhood Forum

CONSTITUTION



Communities Co-Producing a better future for everyone in Harehills

1.0 Name of the Area:



1.1 The name of the forum will be

Harehills Neighbourhood Forum

1.2 The area covered by the Forum will be shown on the attached map of the Harehills Neighbourhood Forum Area.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 What the forum wants to achieve:



a) **Develop a Harehills Neighbourhood Plan that promotes and improves social, economic, and environmental justice and quality of life for people living in the Harehills Neighbourhood area.**

b) **Actively seek the views of residents, organisations, volunteers, businesses, and landowners to identify local issues and collaborate with the local planning authority and services to resolve issues raised.**

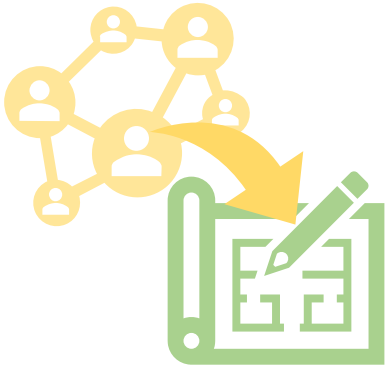


c) **Meet the needs of the neighbourhood's diverse population** through imaginative, creative, responsive, and inclusive planning and development proposals based on principles of co-production.



d) **Amplify the voices of the Harehills communities** in collaborative and creative problem solving.





e) **Enable the participation of all people living in Harehills** as well as taking guidance from elected local government members and people working, investing, and volunteering in the area or who have connections to the area. Ensure this informs the preparation, production, and implementation of **the Harehills Neighbourhood Plan**.



f) **Promote a positive image of Harehills**



g) **Assist in establishing and maintaining positive collaborative relationships across the area** between communities, generations, and organisations. Nurture inclusion and a sense of community.



h) **Create a directory and network of local projects, community assets and services** to improve access to up-to-date relevant information.



i) **Work collaboratively with neighbouring Forums** where there are shared community assets that are important to people. Boundaries must not become barriers to mutual development and improvement.

The Neighbourhood Plan will work to develop plans around themes identified in workshops co-run with local people. These are some of the issues that have been raised so far:



1. **Ensure that the Harehills Neighbourhood Forum Area benefits from the economic development of the City** and funds that are in place to offset the impact of wider development on people living in Harehills.



2. **Safeguarding our environment** - Protection from noise, pollution, and inappropriate development. Supporting businesses to develop in a way that is beneficial both to them and the communities they serve.



3. **Historical Conservation and restoration** - Preserving and celebrating the buildings and diverse social history of the area where possible.



4. **Campaigning for the development of co-designed community spaces** and buildings that are inclusive and encourage people to come together as well as providing opportunities for groups to meet and pursue specific interests and life-long learning. Spaces need to host events and activities that are family friendly and develop intergenerational activities that value the needs of elders and the contributions they can make to the community. Community cafes that allow people to meet and access affordable food and refreshments and just hang out are much needed.



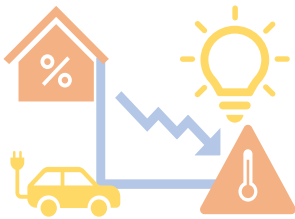
5. **Developing and enhancing our green spaces** and repurposing neglected areas to co-design play areas, sport pitches and quality open spaces that suit all ages and needs.



6. **Improving walking and cycling routes** around the area by the development of green corridors that connect community amenities. Improve transport links to other parts of the city and reduce through traffic around residential areas.



7. **Waste disposal and recycling** - This is an issue that negatively impacts all who live in Harehills. Since the removal of the Stanley Road Recycling Centre without any local alternative being offered, fly tipping is a constant blight. Also 80% of Harehills green bins were removed by the council. As a result bin provision is not sufficient to meet the needs of the community, opportunities for recycling and responsible large waste disposal are poor.



8. **Energy saving housing future proofing** - Ensuring that people in one of the most deprived areas have access to options and energy saving infrastructure and housing.



9. **Ensuring better quality services are delivered to people in Harehills** - A disproportionate number of vulnerable people are housed in Harehills, and appropriate support must be provided to ensure that existing residents are not negatively impacted.



10. **Education and Youth Provision** - Harehills has one of the youngest populations. More needs to be done to support young people in education and extra-curricular activities that will improve their wellbeing and life chances. Few young people in Harehills access city wide educational and recreational facilities as they lack the means to get there so it is important that this inequality of access is addressed.



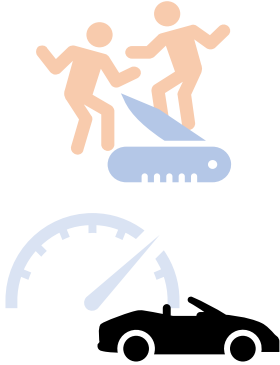
11. **Supporting older people and people who have disabilities** - Many older people in Harehills become increasingly isolated as their terraced housing becomes unsuitable for their physical needs. People either become housebound and isolated or have to move out of the area, cutting them off from communities they know and love.



Any new housing development must include

accessible single storey and supported living options that are prioritised for people in Harehills who need accessible housing.

12. **Community Safety and Wellbeing** – Many residents are under constant stress and fear from anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance, street drinking and speeding cars. Drug dealing has a big impact on the area along with, knife crime, serious assault, sexual exploitation and modern slavery. More must be done to support young people to avoid being pulled into criminal activities through grooming, peer pressure and family circumstances.



The disproportionate housing of parolees and other supervised tenants in Harehills must be addressed. It sets up those trying to rehabilitate to fail and has a terrible impact on residents who may have up to 4 or more poorly supervised houses on one street. Children and young people are being exposed to many more negative influences than elsewhere in the city and this is socially unjust.

Police and youth services must develop better links with communities to co-produce prevention schemes and alternative activities for young people, including support with issues that leave them vulnerable to negative influences. The Council and Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team must address the housing policies that impact the area liaising with support organisations to ensure that people in need get good positive behaviour support and are not disproportionately housed in one area of the city.

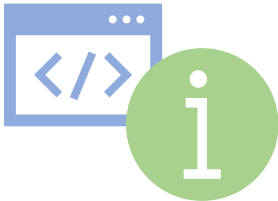
Individual communities must not be scapegoated for issues that are caused by institutional neglect, social inequality, deprivation or prejudice.

3.0 What the Forum will do

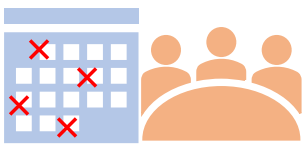
3.1 In order to meet the aims and objectives the Harehills Neighbourhood Forum will:



a) **Co-Produce a sustainable and inclusive Neighbourhood Plan** by and for the communities within the designated Harehills Neighbourhood Area. (See Map)



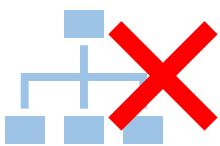
b) **Maintain a Neighbourhood Forum Website and Facebook Page** giving details of the Harehills Neighbourhood Forum Area plus a means to contact the forum and access this constitution, policies agreed by the Forum and minutes of meetings.



c) **Organise at least 4 Open Meetings or other equivalent events per year**, including the Annual General Meeting (AGM), to which all forum members will be invited.



d) **Ensure that meetings are welcoming to everyone and run in an open, inclusive, and empowering way.** Where necessary seek to arrange other creative ways of gathering the opinions of people who may not want to attend formal meetings.



e) Whilst some roles may need to be formalised for registration purposes **the Harehills forum will be facilitated in a non-hierarchical way** with co-working roles and rolling chairs agreed by Active Members (members willing to take on tasks for the Forum). This will give opportunities for people to experience taking up different roles.



f) **Raise money and apply for funding** where necessary to support the activities and aims of the forum.



- g) **Employ paid staff and recruit volunteers where needed.**
- h) **Buy or rent premises/equipment/employ or commission services as needed.**



- i) **Conduct further research and gather information about the area and the communities living in it** to support the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and ensure that it meaningfully reflects the experiences of as many communities as possible.



- j) **Work in partnership with different organisations** that work in the interests of the Neighbourhood Area.



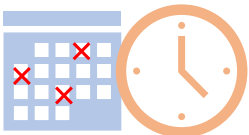
- k) **Ensure that the forum is not influenced by any one political** group or organisation and that the focus is always on what is best for people living in Harehills.



- l) **Work with members to develop policies around how we work** that are accessible and easy to follow.



- m) **Always seek to uplift and celebrate the diversity of our community** and our forum members, from all races, religions, and backgrounds.



- n) **We will run activities and events at different times and dates** so that people have the opportunity to join events around their family and work commitments.



- o) **Forum meetings and events will welcome parents, carers and their children, any marginalized or disempowered groups, older people, people who have physical disabilities or learning disabilities, LGBTQ, culturally diverse groups, women etc.** We will seek disability accessible spaces wherever possible and provide an access guide to each venue and commit to looking for and highlighting venues that have prayer space.



4.0 Values

4.1 The Forum and its Active Members will uphold the following values:



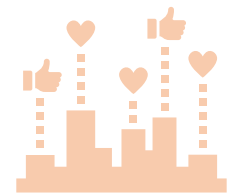
Inclusion



Fairness



Equity



Respect for all



**Representative
of the
Neighbourhood**

**Welcoming
of speakers**

**of any
language**



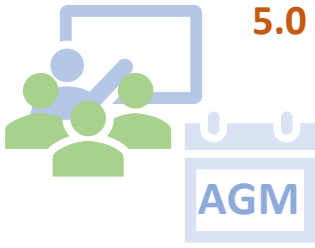
**Accessible to
people of all
abilities and ages**



**A community
led group**

Local people decided that the area needs a Harehills Neighbourhood Forum to provide an opportunity for Harehills communities to share their experiences and work together to demand better services and funding for regeneration and environmental improvements.

4.2 **The Forum is committed to equality of opportunity and maintains and applies Equal opportunities Policy in all of its activities. "We will accept all gender, race, sexual preference, disability, religion, economic, class, family, parental, marital and residence status in this forum. We will treat each other equally and with respect"**



5.0 Annual General Meeting

5.1 **The first AGM** will be held once the Forum has been officially designated. Future AGMs will be held within a period of 12 months of the last AGM.



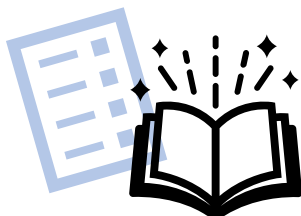
5.2 **Information on elections** to the Active Members (including how to stand) will be sent out to Forum members prior to the AGM, along with an agenda, at least 7 days prior to the AGM.



5.3 **Active Members may call Special General Meetings** if there is an urgent matter consider outside of the AGM cycle. At least 7 days advance notice shall be provided of Special General Meetings.



5.4 Whilst meeting the legalities expected of any constituted group, **the AGM's and any other meeting run by the forum will not be stuffy or overly formal.** Active participation of everyone who attends will be facilitated by using tools for inclusion (communications cards, jargon busters and graphic facilitation) and creative ways to encourage and inspire discussion. Ground rules will be co-developed to ensure all participants feel confident



5.5 **The agenda for each AGM will include:**

- a) Consideration of any business announced in the AGM agenda.
- b) Consideration of the Annual Report of work done by the Forum.
- c) Election of an Active Members of no fewer than 7 and no more than 12 members who will work as described in this Constitution to run the business of the Forum and to make decisions on its behalf between AGMs and General Meetings (see Section 7.0).





- d) Submission and adoption of independently examined accounts for the Forum, consisting of a statement of income and expenditure and a balance sheet for the previous financial year.
- e) A review of the guidelines and policies of the Forum, including of this Constitution and the Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.0 Open Meetings



- 6.1 The Active Members may call Open Meetings of the Forum as appropriate but as a minimum they should be held 4 times per year.
- 6.2 The agreed agenda, after members have been invited to add items for discussion, for each Open meeting will be published at least 7 days in advance.
- 6.3 Attendance at General Meetings (or any Forum meeting) is open to anyone who lives, works, or carries out business within the neighbourhood area.



7.0 The Active Members (members willing to take on responsibilities and tasks needed to keep the Forum functioning).



- 7.1 Active Members will be appointed at the Forum's AGM, who will be responsible for the day-to-day business of the Forum and will meet at least 6 times a year.
- 7.2 The Active Members will include no fewer than 7 and no more than 12 members, the majority of whom will be residents in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 7.3 The Active Members will appoint a Forum Chair, Secretary and Treasurer (which may be shared roles) at its first meeting and thereafter at its first meeting after every AGM.





7.4 **The Active Members may co-opt up to 3 additional members** who will retire at each AGM.



7.5 **The Active Members may appoint sub-groups** or task groups to focus on particular areas of work that have been agreed. These will be guided by, and report to, the Active Members.

7.6 **The quorum for any Active Members meeting shall be at least 50%** of the Active Members.



7.7 **Notification of Active Members meetings and the agreed agenda** (after active members have had the opportunity to add items for discussion) will be sent out at least 7 days before the date of the meeting to all Active Members.

7.8 **The Active Members may dismiss a member of that Active Member Group** (because of any inappropriate behaviour) at an Active Members meeting at which this is an agenda item if two thirds of Active Members present vote to do so.

In seeking to develop a representative Active Members Group and Sub-Groups, we will follow equal opportunities guidelines when making these appointments and apply the principles of co-production to the development of any projects.

8.0 Rules at Meetings

8.1 **The following rules apply to all meetings, including Open Meetings, Active Members Meetings and the AGM:**



a) **Chairing** – each meeting has a chair. The chair of the meeting makes sure that the business of the meeting gets done in an orderly and respectful way. They will use tools for inclusion to ensure that everyone gets a chance to share their ideas and thoughts.

b) **Decision Making** – the Forum endeavours to make decisions by consensus, but in the case of a vote, decisions are made by simple majority of those present and entitled to vote. When the vote is tied, the chair of the meeting has a second, casting, vote.



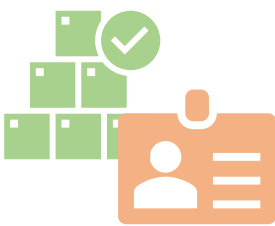


c) **Speaking** – all members are entitled to speak at meetings and, at Open Meetings, all members of the public are entitled to speak. The chair of the meeting has the power to impose time limits on speeches.



d) **Quora** – the number of people who need to be present at Active Members meetings in order to carry out a vote is laid out in paragraph 7.6. There is no quorum for Open Meetings or the AGM.

9.0 Membership



9.1 Membership of the Forum shall be open to all residents who are over 18 and living in the area, all those who work or have businesses in the area, and elected members for the area.

The forum will make sure that young people are given opportunities to have a say and experience active citizenship.



9.2 **Applications for membership** shall be made in writing, email, or phone to the Neighbourhood Forum.

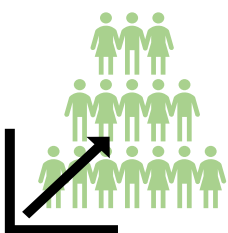
9.3 **Applications can be made by** individuals, organisations, or voluntary groups. Organisations or voluntary groups accepted into membership must designate an individual or a deputy to represent them.

9.4 **Members can attend Forum meetings** and are eligible to vote on proposals put forward by the Forum.

9.5 **There must be a minimum of 21 members made up of the following:**



- a) **Individuals who live in the Harehills**
Neighbourhood Area Boundary;
- b) **Individuals who work in the Harehills**
Neighbourhood Area Boundary (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise);
- c) **Individuals who are elected members of the City Council** whose area falls within the Harehills Neighbourhood Area Boundary.



9.6 **There is no maximum number of members.**



9.7 **People who joined the forum before it was officially recognised** will be considered for official membership at the first Formal Meeting of the Forum (When the Forum has been officially recognised). They will be accepted if a majority of those voting at the meeting approve them.



9.8 **Subsequent applications will be considered at Forum meetings** and deemed accepted if approved by a simple majority of members present.

9.9 **All members of the Forum have a duty to** declare at application stage any financial, party political, employment, land ownership and other organisation links that could have an impact on their, or the Forums work.

9.10 **Membership of any individual, organisation or voluntary group can be withdrawn** at an Open Meeting where this has been specified as an agenda item and two thirds of members present vote in favour of this.

9.11 **Any member who wishes to resign must** provide the Secretary with written notice and will be given support on how to do this if needed.

9.12 **The Chair will have the casting vote on** matters relating to elections and resolutions, and all voting will be determined by a show of hands.

9.13 **Supporting membership is open** to individuals who do not meet the requirements in 9.1, but have an interest in assisting the Forum to achieve its aims and objectives.

10.0 Finance



10.1 **Any monies acquired by the Forum** shall only be used to help achieve the aims and objectives of the Forum as set out in Section 2.0 of this Constitution.

- 10.2 **The treasurer will keep a proper account of the finances of the Forum**, where necessary supported by receipts or invoices, and shall ensure that the Forum has a bank account in its own name.



- 10.3 **All transactions in any format** must be authorised by at least 2 of the following 3 Active Members – the Treasurer, Chair or Secretary. This is without exception.

11.0 Complaints



- 11.1 **Any complaints** about the behaviour of a member of the Forum or sub-Task Groups, in relation to the work undertaken can be made in confidence, in writing to the Secretary unless the complaint is about the Secretary in which case it shall be made to the Chair.
- 11.2 **The elected officers of the Forum will** look into the complaint and decide on action as appropriate. If the complaint concerns the officers themselves – they will remove themselves from this investigation and other members of the forum will be appointed in their place.
- 11.3 **If people do not think their complaint has been considered fairly**, they have the right to appeal. Appeals will be considered by three members of the Active Members Group who have not been involved in the issue being raised.

12.0 Alteration of Constitution



- 12.1 This Constitution can only be changed at an AGM or Special General Meeting of the Forum. Any change to the Constitution requires a simple majority of votes of the members present and who are entitled to vote.

13.0 Disbanding of Forum



13.1 **The Forum can only be disbanded** at a duly advertised Special General Meeting called for the purpose of deciding whether to disband, to which all Forum members shall be invited. The decision to disband the Forum shall be taken if supported by two thirds of members at the Special General Meeting.

13.2 **If the Forum is disbanded**, any assets held in the name of the Forum (after payment of all debts and liabilities) will be disposed of to other organisations having similar objectives to those of the Forum as agreed by a majority of remaining members.

14.0 Extending Life of Forum



14.1 **The Forum is designated for a period of five years.** However, the Forum can apply to have the designation renewed.

