

Appendix Two – Constitution of Westcott Village Forum

1. Name

The Organisation shall be called Westcott Village Forum (“Organisation”) and will be managed on two levels by a Forum (“Forum”) and Working Groups (“Working Groups”).

2. Objectives of the Organisation

The objectives shall be to:

- Facilitate the creation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (“NDP”) (as defined by the Localism Act 2012 or as amended from time to time), hereafter referred to as “the Project” for the Defined Area
- Promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Defined Area
- Encourage creative, innovative, and imaginative proposals to support planning and development appropriate to the diverse nature of the Neighbourhood Area
- Prepare in partnership with the relevant local planning authorities a sustainable Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Neighbourhood Area
- Enable the participation and involvement of all who live or work or are an elected member in the Neighbourhood Area in the preparation, production and implementation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Foster within Westcott a commitment to dialogue and collaborative working to achieve these objectives

3. Defined Area

This is the geographic area within the Westcott civil parish boundary and is the same as the area used for the existing 2017-2026 Westcott NDP. See the Application for Designation of Neighbourhood Area.

4. Start-up Group

The Project will be initiated by a Start-up Group of volunteers willing to act. The Start-up Group may recruit other volunteers to help in setting up the Project.

The Start-up Group will strive to ensure that the Project and the existence of the Forum are publicised to the widest possible audience in Westcott and will use all reasonable endeavours to establish the Forum and the Working Groups as quickly as possible.

When a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer are appointed and both the Forum and the Working Groups are formally established the Start-up Group will cease to exist. The Start-up Group will cover these three roles until they are formally appointed.

The Chairperson of the Forum shall be responsible for:

- Calling and chairing meetings of the Forum and liaising with Working Groups as required
- Exercising a casting vote on elections and resolutions at meetings of the Forum
- Exercising the power to take decisions on urgent matters between Forum meetings. These must be ratified at the next meeting

The Secretary of the Forum shall be responsible for:

- Organising Forum meetings, taking and circulating the minutes of the Forum and making them available to members as required
- Helping to co-ordinate the activities of the Working Groups with the Programme Manager

The Treasurer of the Forum shall be responsible for:

- Maintaining the financial records of the Forum
- Opening and operating a bank account to receive and disburse funds
- Reporting financial updates to Forum meetings

Each of these roles can be shared as agreed by the Forum.

5. Forum Responsibilities

The Forum shall receive and discuss reports and recommendations presented by the Working Groups.

The Forum shall adopt or reject such recommendations. In the case of rejection the Forum shall direct the Working Groups on the steps to be taken to review and amend such recommendations.

The Forum shall be responsible for agreeing the proposed NDP which shall then be consulted on and submitted for approval in accordance with the procedures in the Localism Act and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

Meetings of the Forum shall be recorded in minutes prepared by the Secretary.

6. Forum Membership

The Forum shall exist for a maximum period of five years from the date it is designated by Mole Valley District Council ("MVDC"), according to the Localism Act, and shall consist of at least 21 members ("Members").

The Forum is open to all residents of the village and a number of other stakeholders representing the interests of groups within the village – businesses, the school, the church, the doctors' surgery, the village hall, the sports club, clubs and societies - as well as different geographical areas of the village.

As soon as possible at a meeting of the Forum, Members shall elect a Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer of the Forum.

Membership of the Forum shall be open only to persons aged 18 or over. MVDC shall be entitled to one of the elected Councillors representing Mickleham, Westcott and Okewood to be a member of the Forum. Surrey County Council shall be entitled to its elected Councillor, representing the Dorking Hills Division, to be a member of the Forum.

The Forum shall meet at no less than three monthly intervals.

Forum members should attend all meetings of the Forum. Any member missing three consecutive meetings will be deemed to have resigned and take no further part, unless such member makes written representation to the Chairperson, who shall, in his/her sole discretion, be satisfied that there is reasonable justification for the non attendance. An outline of the responsibilities of a Forum Member is included as Appendix 4.

A quorum for a meeting will be twenty one current registered members. All matters

shall be decided by simple majority. In the event of a tie, then the Chairperson shall have a second casting vote.

7. The Responsibilities of the Working Groups

To gather the facts and evidence, and to identify and to propose to the Forum the Principles, Policies and Strategies required to prepare the NDP.

The Working Groups will achieve their objectives by recruiting volunteers to help with the work involved.

Collectively, the Working Groups will have:

- power to incur costs in furtherance of the Project
- power to co-operate with charities, other voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the Project and to exchange information with them
- power to do all such other lawful things as necessary for the achievement of the Project
- power to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as it thinks fit

The collective duties of the Working Groups are:

- to work with the community to undertake the Project
- to report and make recommendations to the Forum
- to communicate progress of the Project to the residents of Westcott

8. Working Group Membership

The Working Groups are formed for the period of the Project by volunteers, resident in Westcott, and shall consist of such numbers and such structure as the Forum decides is required from time to time.

Four Working Groups have initially been established as follows:

1. Evidence Gathering and Data Analysis – Using a survey asking the right questions and through other sources of data provision, ensure that the Project collects the data that the policy writing working group will need as evidence and then providing them with that evidence.
2. Communication & Participation – To ensure that members of the forum are informed of progress and are motivated, and to co-ordinate forum meetings. To co-ordinate the delivery of the surveys, making sure that the approximate 80% participation target is reached and coordinating the Project's "yes" campaign in the village referendum on the plan.
3. Policy Formulation and Writing – To write the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan and policies based on the evidence established such that it is acceptable to the Independent Reviewer and is in accordance with the MVDC local development framework plan and core strategy documents.
4. Programme Management - To ensure that the Project delivers what is needed at the right time for the dependencies on other actions and be alert to the risks to delivery.

MVDC representatives will be invited to support the Working Groups and attend Forum Meetings.

The Working Groups shall meet as and when they decide so to do in order to

progress the Project in a timely manner. A majority of the members of each Working Group must be members of the Forum.

9. Management of Funds

Disbursement of Funds will require the written authority of any two of the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

10. Affiliations, Interests and Contributions

The Forum and Working Groups shall not be affiliated to any Political Party. The Project shall be run as an independent and objective activity owing allegiance only to the community of Westcott.

All members of the Forum and Working Groups must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a Project decision. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of land or a business, or any other matter that may be considered by the Chairperson to be relevant. Any member failing to do so shall, if so decided by the Chairperson of the Forum, be expelled from their membership.

Organisations and businesses may assist in the production of the NDP and may contribute to the cost of producing it. Details of any donations or assistance must be made publicly available and must not be seen to alter the direction of the NDP.

11. Winding up

In the event that the Forum decides to wind up the Organisation, any funds remaining at that time, after settlement of all creditors, shall be donated to one or more Charities or other voluntary bodies at the discretion of the Forum.

12. Notices and Changes

Notices of meetings of the Forum and the Working Groups shall be given at least seven calendar days before the meeting, and shall include the proposed agenda.

Once agreed formally at a Forum Meeting, changes to the agreed Constitution may be made by a resolution put before a meeting of the Forum, and carried by a vote of 2/3rds of those attending. Notice of such resolution shall be given to all members of the Forum not less than 14 days before the meeting at which it is to be decided.

END of Appendix 2