

Application for Designation as a Neighbourhood Forum under the Provisions of the Localism Act 2012

Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum

Main Contacts

Chair: Cllr Frances Haigh
27 Winterbourne
Horsham
RH12 5JW

E-mail: horshamblueprint@gmail.com

Deputy Chair: Andrew Cooke
Barrington House
Barrington Road
Horsham
RH13 5SN

Email: a.cooke@gmx.com

Neighbourhood Area

This Application for Designation as a Neighbourhood Forum is accompanied by an Application to Designate a Neighbourhood Development Plan Area. The proposed area for the forum is the area known as the un-parished part of “Horsham Town” (“the Area”) which is in concurrence with the Forest, Denne and Trafalgar Neighbourhood Council areas. A map of the Area is attached to the application and is also included in the Constitution.

Consultation with Neighbouring Parishes

The un-parished area adjoins Warnham, Broadbridge Heath, Southwater, Nuthurst, Colgate and North Horsham parishes. Warnham, Southwater and Nuthurst have all had their parish areas designated as their neighbourhood development plan areas. These do not include any of the un-parished area. Broadbridge Heath has been subject to a major strategic development and the parish council has no wish to produce a neighbourhood plan. Colgate Parish Council has not yet decided whether to proceed with a plan. It is possible that they may work together with Ruspur Parish to the north west of their parish.

Discussions have been held with North Horsham Parish Council which adjoins the Area. This parish covers an area similar in size and population (21,981 ONS Census 2014) to the un-parished area (26,231 *ibid*), and is likely to have a major strategic development within their area. The Parish has confirmed that they discussed the issue of a joint plan for the combined area of North Horsham Parish and the un-parished area of Horsham Town at the meeting of the Planning, Environment & Transport Committee of 19th December 2013, and that they do not wish to produce a neighbourhood development plan for any part of the un-parished area.

Neighbourhood Council Areas and Councils

The three Neighbourhood Councils were instrumental in the early stages of getting a neighbourhood plan forum and area process started. Each of the three Neighbourhood Councils has resolved to support the creation of a neighbourhood forum. Early discussions were held with Horsham Town Community Partnership and Horsham Society who consulted with their membership and resolved to support the Forum.

Constitution

A copy of our Constitution is attached. This Constitution was formally adopted at our Inaugural General Meeting on March 29th 2014. There was a separate vote for Clause 4.3, which recognises the key roles of the Neighbourhood Councils, Horsham Town Community Partnership and Horsham Society in working together in support of the Forum's objectives and to ensure continuity in the initial stages: this was carried unanimously.

Statement

1. **Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum** has been established with the express purpose of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Area and to produce and maintain a Neighbourhood Development Plan covering the Area. This is in accordance with the 2011 Localism Act 61F (5)(a).

Membership

2. **Membership of the Forum** is open to all individuals who live or work in the Area and also to elected members representing the Area. The Forum is non-political and fully inclusive in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and will actively aim for as wide a representation of communities in the Area as possible. In accordance with section 61F(5)(b) of the 2011 Localism Act, membership is open to—
 - i. Individuals who live in the Area.
 - ii. Individuals who work in the Area (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise), and
 - iii. Individuals who are elected ward members for West Sussex County Council or Horsham District Council any of whose area falls within the Area.

The membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom—

- i. Lives in the Area
 - ii. Works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise), or
 - iii. Is an elected ward member for West Sussex County Council or Horsham District Council any of whose area falls within the Area.
3. We currently have more than **160 individual members** on our mailing list. Of these members, 46 have signed the Constitution in support of the Forum. Profiles of the signatories are in the attached *Horsham Blueprint Signed Members*. We therefore have considerably more than the legislative requirement for 21 members and can

confirm that they include residents of the Area, people working or running businesses in the Area and local District and County Councillors.

Governance arrangements

4. The **Steering Group** may be between 6 and 15 people. (See attached *Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum Steering Group 2014-15*). The Steering Group is elected annually at the General Meeting, and includes 5 reserved spaces for representatives from Denne, Forest and Trafalgar Neighbourhood Councils, Horsham Town Community Partnership and Horsham Society. The Steering Group is tasked with over-seeing the process of producing a neighbourhood plan and undertaking necessary administrative tasks for the smooth running of the Forum. We have been given funding by the Community Development Foundation to assist with this process between March 2014 and December 2014.
The Steering Group for 2014/15 was elected at the Inaugural General Meeting.
5. The Steering Group's first tasks are to continue with community engagement with individuals, businesses and organisations, to define the process that will be undertaken to produce the neighbourhood plan and to start to collect ideas and evidence for the plan via workshops and street walkabouts.
6. **Working Groups** are being established by the Steering Group to address the key themes that we identify from our community engagement as the basis of the neighbourhood plan. These working groups will be open to everyone from the community covered by the Area so that we draw on a wide range of talents, interests and expertise.

Funding

7. **Funding** for the early stages of developing the Forum has come from the Department for Communities and Local Government via Locality which provided us with consultancy support from Angela Koch of ImaginePlaces. This support enabled us to reach the milestone of producing a Constitution ready for our Inaugural General Meeting. We have also been awarded funding of £7000 from Community Development Foundation to support us from the IGM until 31st December 2014. We have had further funding of £500 from Horsham District Council towards initial event costs and publicity.

Growing the Forum

8. We are continuing our work to engage people from across the geographical area and from different sections of the community. We expect to involve many more during this year. This community engagement is needed to define the issues and aims for

the plan, to inform the overall vision and to create a sense of wider ownership for the plan.

9. Some of the key groups the forum is already working with include:

Families and Young People:

The **Think Family** project applies to Horsham Park Ward which lies wholly within the Area. We have made contact with Reverend Jac Parsons from Brighton Road Baptist Church who is leading the Think Family project and will be working with her to meet the Think Family objectives. We have also liaised with the neighbourhood policing team and two police officers attended one of our meetings.

We want to engage **Schools and Collyer's Sixth Form College** in neighbourhood planning. Taking neighbourhood planning in to schools will be the responsibility of one of our working groups. We will encourage projects to fit in with the students' practical work such as helping to produce videos about the Area and contributing to other activities such as surveys and walkabouts. We have the support of the 5th/10th Horsham Weald Scouts who will be working with us, and will be talking to other youth groups. We have links to HYPER through Horsham Town Community Partnership.

Businesses

Liaison with **Businesses** will be the responsibility of another working group and will include businesses of all types: commercial, services and industrial. We have had initial discussions with Gill Buchanan of Horsham Unlimited and agreed to support the creation of a Business Improvement District and to liaise to ensure no conflict of interests or overlap. We had support from Gill Buchanan, in her capacity as manager of Swan Walk, and from PJ Aldred of Horsham Markets in providing us with stalls for our initial community engagement. We have also held discussions with Creative Assembly, one of the major employers in the town centre.

Minority and disadvantaged groups

We have already publicised the Forum to **Disabled people** via the Horsham District Access Forum and the Equalities Officer. We have also talked to Age UK Horsham on behalf of older residents. As part of the evidence gathering process we should learn more about our community, and will be able to make sure we identify other groups that might be underrepresented and take action to engage them. This could include people from minority religious and cultural groups, for example.

Affordable Housing

Although not a specific group, affordable housing is a major issue in the Area. We have therefore had initial discussions with Saxon Weald, which is the main housing association for the Area having taken responsibility for Horsham District Council's housing stock (and therefore also a significant business in the Area). We will

continue to work closely with them to identify opportunities for affordable housing and for improving community relations, reducing anti-social behaviour and enhancing community facilities. We have also asked for opportunities to talk with their residents associations and for representatives from these groups to take part in our working groups.

Raising awareness and keeping in touch

10. **People who live and work in the Area** are kept in touch with Forum activities via the Neighbourhood Councils, Horsham Town Community Partnership, Horsham Society, residents' associations and/or action groups (see attached list of *HBNF Affiliated Organisations*). Members will receive regular newsletters.
11. **People who live and work in the Area** can participate in the Forum's work in a variety of ways. The Neighbourhood Forum is for the whole community and there will be many opportunities for everyone to take part in the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan.
12. The Forum has email (horshamblueprint@gmail.com), a website (<http://horshamblueprint.btck.co.uk/>), Twitter (@BlueprintNF) and can be contacted by post or telephone via any of the Steering Group members. Various leaflets were produced for our events held in the town centre to promote the Forum. Press releases are issued before and after our events to keep the public informed, and press coverage has been given to us by West Sussex County Times, the District Post and "All About Horsham". One of the Steering Group will be developing our on-line presence further to include Facebook.
13. We have funding to enable us to reach out to more people through leafleting and events. There are 26,000 people living in the Area according to the 2011 Census figures and reaching all of them will be a major task.

Frances Haigh
Chair of Horsham Blueprint NF

2nd June 2014