

Cheshire West and Chester Council

Delegated report

Date: 18 January 2021

Proposed Neighbourhood Forum: Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum

Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and Schedule 9 of the Localism Act 2011

Date application first publicised: 26 November 2020

Area name: Handbridge Neighbourhood Area

Applicant name: Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum

Ward: Handbridge Park Ward

Ward Members: Cllr Neil Sullivan and Cllr Razia Daniels

Case officer: Catherine Morgetroyd

Recommendation:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This delegated report relates to the assessment of the application for the designation of the Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum.
- 1.2 The application for the designation of Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum was publicised on 26 November 2020. The application was made under Regulation 8 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 must contain the following information:
 - The name of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
 - A copy of the written constitution of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
 - The name of the neighbourhood area to which the application relates and a map which identifies the area;
 - The contact details of at least one member of the proposed neighbourhood forum to be made public under regulations 9 and 10; and
 - A statement which explains how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions contained in section 61F(5) of the 1990 Act.

2 Area and forum description

- 2.1 A separate application for the Handbridge Neighbourhood Area has been submitted and publicised at the same time as the Neighbourhood Forum application. The decision on the Neighbourhood Area will be set out in a separate delegated report.
- 2.2 The Neighbourhood Area covers the urban area of Handbridge and is clearly bounded by established geographical features:
 - River Dee to the North and East
 - A483 Wrexham Road to the West
 - Boundary with Eccleston Parish to the South
- 2.3 The proposed Neighbourhood Area does not include any existing parished areas and has a clear boundary with the other parts of Handbridge Park Ward including Westminster Park and Curzon Park.
- 2.4 A map of the proposed Handbridge Neighbourhood Area is attached to this report.
- 2.5 As the area is not covered by a Parish Council, a Neighbourhood Forum must be set up in order to take forward the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.6 Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire Community Action facilitated initial meetings with the local community, businesses and other stakeholders to discuss the potential for a Neighbourhood Plan. As a result of these initial meetings a committee of five community members was established to progress the formal applications for the Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.7 A constitution document was prepared. Local publicity about the Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Forum was undertaken in order to recruit members of the Neighbourhood Forum. This included an advertisement / notice in a local magazine.

3 Publicity

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Forum application was publicised by public notice in the Chester Standard (print and online copies) on 26 November 2020.
- 3.2 Details of the application were published on the Council's website from 26 November 2020 onwards at <http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning>.
- 3.3 Copies of the public notice were also placed on all publicly accessible notice boards in Handbridge. Copies of the application documents and notice were also made available to view at the St Mary's Handbridge Centre, Overleigh Road, Handbridge (except when closed due to coronavirus restrictions).

- 3.4 Local councillors were informed of the application and advised to contact the case officer for further information.
- 3.5 The six-week publicity period ran from 26 November 2020 – 7 January 2021.
- 3.6 The neighbouring parish councils of Dodleston and District, Eaton and Eccleston, Huntington, and Great Boughton were notified of the application by email on 26 November 2020.
- 3.7 The publicity arrangements complied with Regulation 9 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 3.8 The following internal consultees were notified via email: Property; Transport (planning); Highways and traffic; Strategic transport; Open space; Green space; Landscape; Total environment; Conservation; Archaeology; Housing; Legal; Health; Environmental protection; Regeneration and economic development; Locality; Planning; Mersey Forest; Public rights of way; Education; Climate change; Emergency planning.
- 3.9 The Council received representations from:
- The Environment Agency – No comments.
 - Highways England – No comments.
 - Natural England – No comments on the suitability of the proposed plan area or the proposed neighbourhood planning body. Provide information sources and highlight some potential environmental risks and opportunities that neighbourhood plans or orders may present.
 - The Coal Authority – No comments.
 - Canal and River Trust – No comments.
 - Historic England – No specific comments but supportive of the designation of the proposed neighbourhood forum and keen that protection of historic environment is appropriately taken into consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Homes England – No comments but will continue to engage as appropriate.
 - National Grid – An assessment has been carried out with respect to National Grid's electricity and gas transmission assets which include high voltage electricity assets and high-pressure gas pipelines. National Grid has identified that it has no record of such assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area and hence have no specific comments.
 - Local resident – objects to the designation on the grounds that a Neighbourhood Plan is not required as there is little unprotected space that can be built on in Handbridge and it would be an unnecessary level of

bureaucracy. While the objection is acknowledged by CWaC, it should be noted that the assessment of the proposed Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum is based on whether the Forum meets the requirements in the regulations, rather than whether a Neighbourhood Plan is necessary. However, Neighbourhood Plans can provide additional protection to important sites and can control and influence future development, in terms of design and style of development as well as location. Neighbourhood Plan policies could be used to assess proposals for extensions to existing properties or changes of use that require planning permission, so are relevant to existing built-up areas as well as areas with large sites available for future development. No other objections have been received from local residents at this stage.

- CWaC Conservation and Design Team – No objection in principle but mention that the proposed boundary encompasses the historic core of Handbridge and the various character areas described in the Chester Characterisation Study. Suggest that this will be helpful for the group when thinking about policies that relate to the historic environment, and design.
- CWaC PROW Asset Management Team – No comments.
- CWaC Highways Development Management Team – No comments.

4 Issues and assessment

4.1 Section 61F(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) sets out the following conditions, which must be met for a local planning authority to be able to designate an organisation or body as a Neighbourhood Forum:

- (a) it is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned (whether or not it is also established for the express purpose of promoting the carrying on of trades, professions or other businesses in such an area),
- (b) its membership is open to—
 - (i) individuals who live in the neighbourhood area concerned,
 - (ii) individuals who work there (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise), and
 - (iii) individuals who are elected members of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned,
- (c) its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom—
 - (i) lives in the neighbourhood area concerned,
 - (ii) works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise),or

(iii) is an elected member of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned,

(d) it has a written constitution, and

(e) such other conditions as may be prescribed.

4.2 The Neighbourhood Area application form, supporting statement and constitution are attached to this report. As the Neighbourhood Forum have prepared a written constitution, they meet the requirements of paragraph 4.1d) above.

4.3 The constitution sets out that the purpose of the Neighbourhood Forum is:
i) to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Area: and
ii) to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Area.

As such, it meets the requirements of paragraph 4.1a).

4.4 The constitution also identifies that membership of the Forum is open to:
i) Individuals aged 16 or over who live, work, study or volunteer in the Area; and

ii) Individuals who are elected members of Cheshire West and Chester Council, any of whose area falls within the Area.

As such, it meets the requirements of paragraph 4.1b).

4.5 The constitution states that the Forum will comprise at least 21 individuals who live or work within the Area or who are elected members of Cheshire West and Chester Council, any of whose area falls within the Area.

Appendix A of the application form provides details of the names, postcodes, local connection, age bracket and occupation of 28 members of the Forum. The members all live or work in the area or are an elected member covering the area, apart from two members. One of the members volunteers in the area and the other is an expert on one location in the area but it is not clear whether they live or work in the area. As such, there are over 21 individuals who live or work in the area or are elected members. Appendix A is for Council use only and has not been made publicly available as part of the application documentation due to the personal nature of some of the information.

4.6 Section 61F(7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) identifies that a local planning authority must, in determining under subsection (5) whether to designate an organisation or body as a Neighbourhood Forum for a Neighbourhood Area, have regard to the desirability of designating an organisation or body –

i) which has secured (or taken reasonable steps to attempt to secure) that its membership includes at least one individual falling within each of the sub-paragraphs (i) to (iii) of subsection (5)(b),

- ii) whose membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area concerned and from different sections of the community in that area, and
 - iii) whose purpose reflects (in general terms) the character of that area.
- 4.7 The list of Forum members provided as part of the application includes at least one individual from each of the sub-paragraphs of subsection (5)(b).
- 4.8 Postcodes were provided for each of the members of the Forum and the application form statement includes a map showing that the locations are well spread across the Handbridge area. The information provided within Appendix A to the application form indicates that the members of the forum are drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area concerned and from different sections of the community as they differ in ages, occupations and include a mix of residents, employees, volunteers and Councillors. The constitution also identifies that membership shall be drawn from different parts of the area and different sections of the community. There are a mix of ages of members, but a greater number of members are within the over-45 age group bands. The statement submitted as part of the application indicates that this reflects the initial outreach activities which have been possible during the pandemic. It also states that the Forum is committed to ensuring increased participation from young adults in the educational organisations within the area. As such, the Forum is considered to meet the requirements in paragraph 4.6i) and ii).
- 4.9 The purpose of the Forum is set out in the constitution and is described in paragraph 4.3 above. The statement submitted as part of the application also identifies that once the Forum has been designated there will be an Annual General Meeting, followed by formation of working groups to focus on key aspects of the development needs of the area. The examples suggested include development design and standards; green space and conservation; heritage recognition and protection; education needs and impact; and commerce and business needs and development. This is considered to reflect the character of the area and therefore meets the requirements in paragraph 4.6iii).
- 4.10 No other application has previously been made for a Neighbourhood Forum or Neighbourhood Area covering all or part of this area and there are no existing designated Neighbourhood Forums or Neighbourhood Areas covering this area.
- 4.3 Handbridge Neighbourhood Area is unparished. Therefore Handbridge neighbourhood Forum is a relevant body to undertake Neighbourhood Planning in that area in accordance with section 61F(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The application for the Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum complied with the requirements of the regulations. The application was publicised in accordance with the regulations and 12 representations were received, the majority of which had no comment or supported the designation. There was one objection, which stated that the Neighbourhood Plan was unnecessary as there is very little unprotected land which can be developed and the Plan would result in an additional level of bureaucracy. This objection is addressed in paragraph 3.9 above, and did not raise any specific issues with the Neighbourhood Forum or whether it meets the requirements in the regulations.
- 5.2 The Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum is considered appropriate because:
- No other applications have been made for Neighbourhood Forums or Neighbourhood Areas covering all or part of the area.
 - The Neighbourhood Forum has been established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned.
 - Its membership is open to individuals who live in the neighbourhood area concerned; individuals who work there; and individuals who are elected members any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned.
 - Its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom lives or works in the area or is a relevant elected member.
 - It has a written constitution.
 - It has secured (or taken reasonable steps to attempt to secure) that its membership includes at least one individual falling within each of the sub-paragraphs (i) to (iii) of subsection (5)(b).
 - Its membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area concerned and from different sections of the community in that area.
 - Its purpose reflects (in general terms) the character of that area.
 - Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum is the relevant body to undertake Neighbourhood Planning in accordance with Section 61F(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

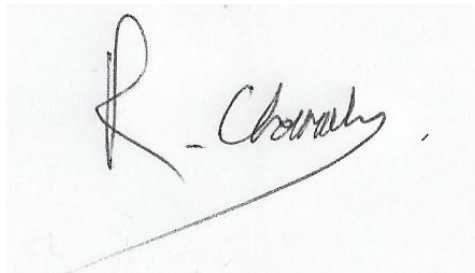
6 Decision

- 6.1 That the Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum is approved and is formally designated.
- 6.2 The reasons for this decision are that the Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum is considered appropriate, for the reasons explained in paragraph 5.2.

- 6.3 The Head of Planning hereby exercise their delegated authority to designate the Neighbourhood Forum.
- 6.4 A copy of this note will be sent to Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum and relevant local Councillors.
- 6.5 In accordance with Regulation 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), as soon as possible after the date of the decision the Council will publish the following on its website:
- a) the name of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
 - b) a copy of the written constitution of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
 - c) the name of the neighbourhood area to which the application relates and a map which identifies the area;
 - d) the contact details of at least one member of the proposed neighbourhood forum to be made public under regulations 9 and 10; and
 - e) a statement which explains how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions contained in section 61F(5) of the 1990 Act.

7 Attachments

- 7.1 Copy of Neighbourhood Forum application form, supporting statement, constitution and a map of Handbridge Neighbourhood Area

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Charnley', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Signed

Head of Planning

Date **18 January 2021**

Application to designate a Neighbourhood Forum

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Please note that the information provided on this application form may be published on the Authority's website (except the confidential response to question 6).

If completing by hand, please use block capitals and black ink.

1) Applicant contact details

Please provide contact details for at least one member of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum. Please note that these details will be made publicly available.

Title and full name

Dr Alan Martin Smith

Address and postcode

[REDACTED]

Email address

[REDACTED]

2) Name of proposed Forum

HANDBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

3) Name of the Neighbourhood Area to which this application relates

HANDBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

Please provide a map (Ordnance Survey based at an appropriate scale) which clearly identifies the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area.

Please note that a separate application form needs to be completed in relation to the Neighbourhood Area, however, this can be submitted at the same time as the Neighbourhood Forum application.

Map of Neighbourhood Area attached ☒

4) Written constitution

Please provide a copy of the Neighbourhood Forum's written constitution.

As a guide, a written constitution could contain:

- the name and purpose of the neighbourhood forum;
- working arrangements including sub-groups, partners and their roles;
- pattern of meetings and details of how decisions will be made;
- details of governance, including official positions;
- arrangements for management and financial management; and / or
- membership and procedures for replacement of members where necessary.

The written constitution is also an opportunity for the proposed Neighbourhood Forum to set out how the Forum meets the required conditions contained in Section 61F(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Copy of written constitution attached ☐

5) Statement explaining how the proposed Neighbourhood Forum meets the conditions contained in section 61F (5) of the 1990 Act and is a relevant body

This section provides the opportunity to set out the purpose, aims and ambitions of the Neighbourhood Forum and to demonstrate how its membership is representative of the local community.

In order for the Council to designate a Neighbourhood Forum to act on behalf of a Neighbourhood Area, the Council needs to be satisfied that the following conditions are met:

- the proposed forum is established for the purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well being of the area;
- membership is open to and includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom – live in the Neighbourhood Area concerned, work there or are ward councillors whose ward (or part of their ward) falls within the Neighbourhood Area concerned; and
- it has a written constitution.

The Council will check that the application meets the requirements above. In making a decision about whether to designate the neighbourhood forum, the Council must also consider the extent to which the body applying to be a Neighbourhood Forum has:-

- Secured, or taken reasonable steps to secure, membership from at least one individual who lives in the area, one who works in the area and one who is ward councillor whose ward (or part of their ward) falls within the Neighbourhood Area.
- Drawn its membership from different places within the neighbourhood area concerned, and from different sections of the community in the area.
- A purpose which reflects the character of the neighbourhood area (in general terms).

The Council will use the address, age and occupation information provided under Question 6 to assess the extent to which membership is drawn from different places and different sections of the community. However you may also wish to set out in your statement how they have met these requirements.

(Please continue on a separate page if necessary)

6) Neighbourhood Forum membership information

Whilst a list is not strictly required by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), it does enable the proposed Neighbourhood Forum to demonstrate that its membership is widely drawn from across the neighbourhood and from a range of people in the community.

The Neighbourhood Forum must have at least 21 individuals, however there is no maximum number. Please provide information in the attached table at appendix A. This additional information will not be made public.

Does the Neighbourhood Forum have at least 21 members?

(please select one answer)

Yes ☐

No ☐

7) Declaration

I hereby apply to designate a Neighbourhood Forum as described on this form and any accompanying information.

Name

Signature

Date

Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum Application: Question 5 Statement

Handbridge Neighbourhood Area has a pleasant mix of residential development, educational establishments and green spaces. It is served by a significant number of local shops, small businesses, public houses, churches and community facilities.

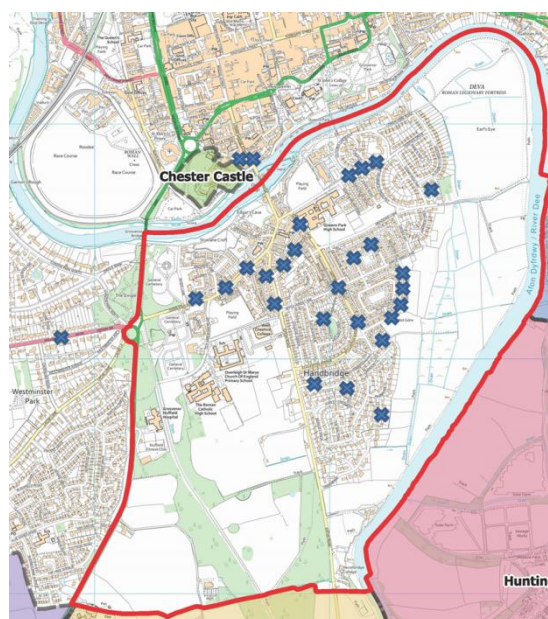
Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) and the two Handbridge Park Ward Councillors, have encouraged actively the development of Neighbourhood Plans for parished and unparished areas to augment the policies in the adopted Local Plan. On 12 February 2019 a meeting was convened in St Mary's Handbridge Community Centre to introduce the idea of the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the area. Over 100 people attended and showed significant interest in the development of supplementary planning policies that would facilitate appropriate development in our area: reflecting the valuable mix of heritage and modern features, and extensive green space. Subsequent public meetings held on 23 September 2019, 4 December 2019 and 23 January 2020 refined the area and purpose of the activity.

A Committee of five community members was established in January 2020 to progress the formal applications for Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum designation by the Council.

With significant assistance from Cheshire Community Action, a Constitution has been established for the Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum which has at its heart the key purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Handbridge Neighbourhood Area.

The Committee has met approximately monthly during 2020 to maintain momentum towards the launch of a Neighbourhood Forum, however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic it was judged inappropriate to begin the launch until September 2020. The Forum now has a Facebook Group (www.facebook.com/groups/handbridgeneighbourhoodforum) and has secured an initial Forum membership which we believe meets statutory requirements.

The membership of the Forum reflects reasonably the demographic and interest mix of the area. As the map indicates, over 80% of members reside within the Area and the remainder either work in the Area, volunteer in the Area or are a Councillor for Handbridge Park Ward. 57% are male and 43% are female. 75% are in the over-45 age group bands. This reflects the initial outreach activities which have been possible during the pandemic. The Forum is committed to ensuring increased participation from the younger age group bands and from young adults in the educational organisations within the Area. A continuing aim of the Forum will be to ensure that all community groups are communicated with regularly and encouraged to contribute to the development of the Plan.



Once the Council has designated the Forum the intention is to hold an inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Forum formally to elect the Officers defined in the Constitution. This will be followed by the formation of Working Groups that will focus on key aspects of the development needs of the Area. Examples may include: Development design and standards; Green Space and conservation; Heritage recognition and protection; Education needs and impact; and, Commerce and business needs and development. We anticipate a significant focus on the needs of young people and future generations in Handbridge.

The target will be to draft a Neighbourhood Development Plan that can be put to a Local Referendum.

Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

1. NAME

The name of the Forum shall be the Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum (the Forum).

2. AREA OF BENEFIT

The area in which the Forum will pursue its objects is the Handbridge Neighbourhood Area (the Area), which is the area designated by Cheshire West & Chester Council for which the Forum will produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

3. OBJECTIVES

- a) The purpose of the Forum is:
 - i) to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Area; and
 - ii) to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Area.
- b) The Forum shall be non-party in politics, non-sectarian in religion and seek to promote inclusion of all interests and participation of all persons (including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010) within the Area.

4. POWERS

- a) In furtherance of its objects the Forum may:
 - i) invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Forum, and to open a bank account to manage such funds;
 - ii) publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars etc.;
 - iii) work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations;
 - iv) employ staff and volunteers as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the objects of the Forum;
 - v) take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objects of the Forum, including taking out any contracts which it may see fit.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- a) Membership of the Forum is open to:
 - i) Individuals aged 16 or over who live, work, study or volunteer in the Area; and
 - ii) Individuals who are elected members of Cheshire West & Chester Council, any of whose area falls within the Area.
- b) The Forum will comprise at least 21 individuals who live or work within the Area or who are elected members of Cheshire West and Chester Council, any of whose area falls within the Area.
- c) Membership shall be drawn from different parts of the Area and different sections of the community in the Area.
- d) The Committee:

- i) may require applications for membership to be made in any reasonable way that it decides;
 - ii) shall approve membership applications that meet the membership criteria in clause 5a;
 - iii) shall, if they approve an application for membership, notify the applicant of their decision within 21 days; and
 - iv) may refuse an application for membership if it decides the applicant does not meet the membership criteria in clause 5a or there is a conflict of interest as defined in clause 7.
- e) A list of all members will be kept by the Secretary and any personal details will be only be stored and used with the individual's consent in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

6. CEASING TO BE A MEMBER

- a) Membership will cease if:
 - i) the member sends a notice of resignation to the Committee;
 - ii) the member dies;
 - iii) the member no longer lives, works, studies or volunteers in the Area; or
 - iv) the Committee decides that there is a conflict of interest (as defined in clause 7) and that the member in question should be removed from membership.
- b) Any offensive or discriminatory behaviour, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive or discriminatory way may be asked not to attend further meetings or may be removed from membership if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

7. MANAGING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- a) Member Obligation: Conflicts of interest must be declared as soon as members are aware of any possibility that their personal or wider interests could influence their decision-making.
- b) References to "conflicts" or "conflicts of interest" in this clause include actual or potential conflicts of interest, pecuniary or non-pecuniary and conflicts of loyalty.
- c) Conflicts can arise because of a member's personal interests or duties owed to a third party, for example, without limitation, by virtue of being an employee of Cheshire West & Chester Council, or of a developer or a company assisting any current or future developments in the area, or by working for or belonging to an organisation that might have a financial interest in the outcome of the Neighbourhood Plan. Owning a property or business in the area is not in itself a conflict of interest.
- d) Conflicts can inhibit open discussions and may result in irrelevant considerations being taken into account when taking decisions.
- e) The Forum aims to operate free from conflicts and manage conflicts appropriately when they arise. As such:
 - i) upon joining, each member must disclose to the Committee the nature of any interests that may give rise to a conflict. The Secretary shall keep a record of such conflicts;

- ii) members should be alert to situations that may give rise to a conflict, and promptly inform the Committee if any such situation arises;
 - iii) it is for the member concerned to decide which matters to disclose but, if in doubt, they should make a disclosure.
- f) The Committee may decide how to manage conflicts as it deems appropriate. Without limitation, measures could include: excluding a member from voting on certain issues. All conflicts of interest arising in meetings should be recorded in minutes stating: who has the conflict, what the conflict of interest is, and how it was managed.

8. FORUM COMMITTEE

- a) The business of the Forum will be managed by the Forum Committee (the Committee).
- b) The membership of the Committee will be as follows:
 - i) Chairperson
 - ii) Vice Chairperson
 - iii) Secretary
 - iv) Treasurer
 - v) Conveners of the sub-groups
- c) The officers of the Committee (Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer) will be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Forum.
- d) In the event of an officer standing down during the year, a replacement will be elected by the next General Meeting of members.
- e) The officers' roles are as follows:
 - i) Chairperson, who shall chair both General and Committee meetings.
 - ii) Vice-Chairperson, who shall deputise for the Chairperson.
 - iii) Secretary, who shall be responsible for the taking of minutes, the distribution of all meeting papers and keeping a list of members.
 - iv) Treasurer, who shall be responsible for maintaining accounts.
- f) The Committee has the power to co-opt up to 4 additional members to ensure:
 - i) effective representation of people who live, work, study or volunteer in the Area; and/or
 - ii) that the Committee has the appropriate skills and competencies to carry out its responsibilities.
- g) Committee Responsibilities:
 - i) The overall management of the business of the Forum.
 - ii) Coordinating the activities of the working groups.
 - iii) Drafting, agreeing and promoting the implementation of the Handbridge Neighbourhood Plan.
- h) Committee Meetings:

- i) The Committee shall meet as often as necessary for the effective transaction of the Forum's business, using a variety of venues across the Area.
- ii) All meeting agendas, papers and minutes shall be made available to Forum members.

9. WORKING GROUPS

- a) The Committee may appoint such working groups as it considers necessary to assist it in carrying out the Forum's objectives set out in clause 3.
- b) Each working group appointed shall operate within Terms of Reference provided by the Committee.
- c) Each working group shall have a chairperson nominated by the Committee, who will report on the working group's progress to the Committee as it requires.
- d) No working group shall be entitled to authorise or commit the Forum to any expenditure without the Committee's approval.

10. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- a) An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held within 15 months of the previous AGM.
- b) All Forum members will be notified in writing at least 21 days before the date of the meeting, giving the venue, date and time.
- c) At the AGM:
 - i) The Chairperson of the Committee will present a report of the work of the Forum over the year.
 - ii) The Treasurer will present the accounts of the Forum for the previous year.
 - iii) The officers of the Committee for the next year will be elected.
 - iv) Any proposals submitted by members to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting will be discussed.

11. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

- a) The Chairperson or the Secretary of the Committee may call a Special General Meeting at the request of the majority of the Committee members, or, at least 11 or 10% of the membership (whichever is the greater number) giving a written request to the Chairperson or Secretary stating the reason for their request.
- b) All members will be given 21 days' notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time.

12. RULES OF PROCEDURE

- a) **Voting**

Subject to the provisions of clause 14, all questions arising at any meetings shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote at that meeting. No member shall exercise more than one vote, but in the case of an equality of votes the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.
- b) **Quorum**

At least one half of the members shall form a quorum at meetings of the Committee and at all working groups. 11 or one tenth of all members, whichever is the higher, shall form a quorum at Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings of the Forum.

c) **Minutes**

Minutes recording all proceedings and resolutions of meetings shall be kept by the Forum, the Committee and any working groups which may have been established.

13. FINANCE

- a) All monies raised by or on behalf of the Forum shall be applied to further the objectives of the Forum set out in clause 3 and for no other purpose.
- b) An account may be maintained on behalf of the Forum at a bank agreed by the Committee. Up to 4 cheque signatories may be nominated by the Committee (1 to be the Treasurer). Any 2 of these must sign every cheque or approve every online banking transaction. The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household.
- c) The Committee may, for administrative convenience, set up finance handling arrangements with an appropriate established organisation to administer all banking transactions on behalf of the Forum. In the event that this approach is adopted:
 - i) A written agreement will be enacted with the organisation;
 - ii) All financial transactions must be approved by the Committee prior to any banking transactions being carried out by the organisation; and
 - iii) All monies raised by or on behalf of the Forum must be clearly presented and identifiable as a separate budget line within the accounts and any financial reporting arrangements of the organisation.
- d) Records of income and expenditure shall be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial report given to the Committee as it requires.
- e) The end of year accounts produced by the Treasurer shall be examined by an independent examiner prior to being presented at the AGM. The person so appointed to carry out the independent examination shall not be a member of the Committee.
- f) None of the income or property of the Forum may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to any member of the Forum. This does not prevent a member (who is not also a member of the Committee) receiving reasonable expenses properly incurred when acting on behalf of the Forum and proper remuneration for any goods or services supplied to the Forum.
- g) The Committee may delegate spending powers with clear limitations to individual members and /or working groups acting on behalf of the Forum.
- h) Members of the Committee:
 - i) are entitled to be reimbursed from the property of the Forum such reasonable expenses properly incurred when acting on behalf of the Forum; and
 - ii) may benefit from indemnity insurance purchased at the Forum's expense.

- i) Members of any working groups which may have been established:
 - i) are entitled to be reimbursed from the property of the Forum such reasonable expenses properly incurred when acting on behalf of the Forum and proper remuneration for any goods or services supplied to the Forum; and
 - ii) may benefit from indemnity insurance purchased at the Forum's expense.

14. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- a) Amendments to the constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.
- b) Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing not less than 28 days before the date of the meeting at which it is first to be considered. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of the meeting.
- c) Any proposal to amend the constitution will require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote at the meeting.

15. DISSOLUTION

- a) If a meeting of the Committee, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down the Forum, it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the Forum.
- b) If it is agreed by a simple majority of those present and voting at such meeting to dissolve the Forum, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts and liabilities have been paid, shall be used for the benefit of the residents of the Area.
- c) The Forum shall exist for 5 years from its formal designation and at its AGM at the end of year 4 the AGM will give consideration to a continuing or successor organisation to maintain and monitor the Handbridge Neighbourhood Plan.

THIS CONSTITUTION was adopted as the Constitution of Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum at a meeting held at:

Venue _____

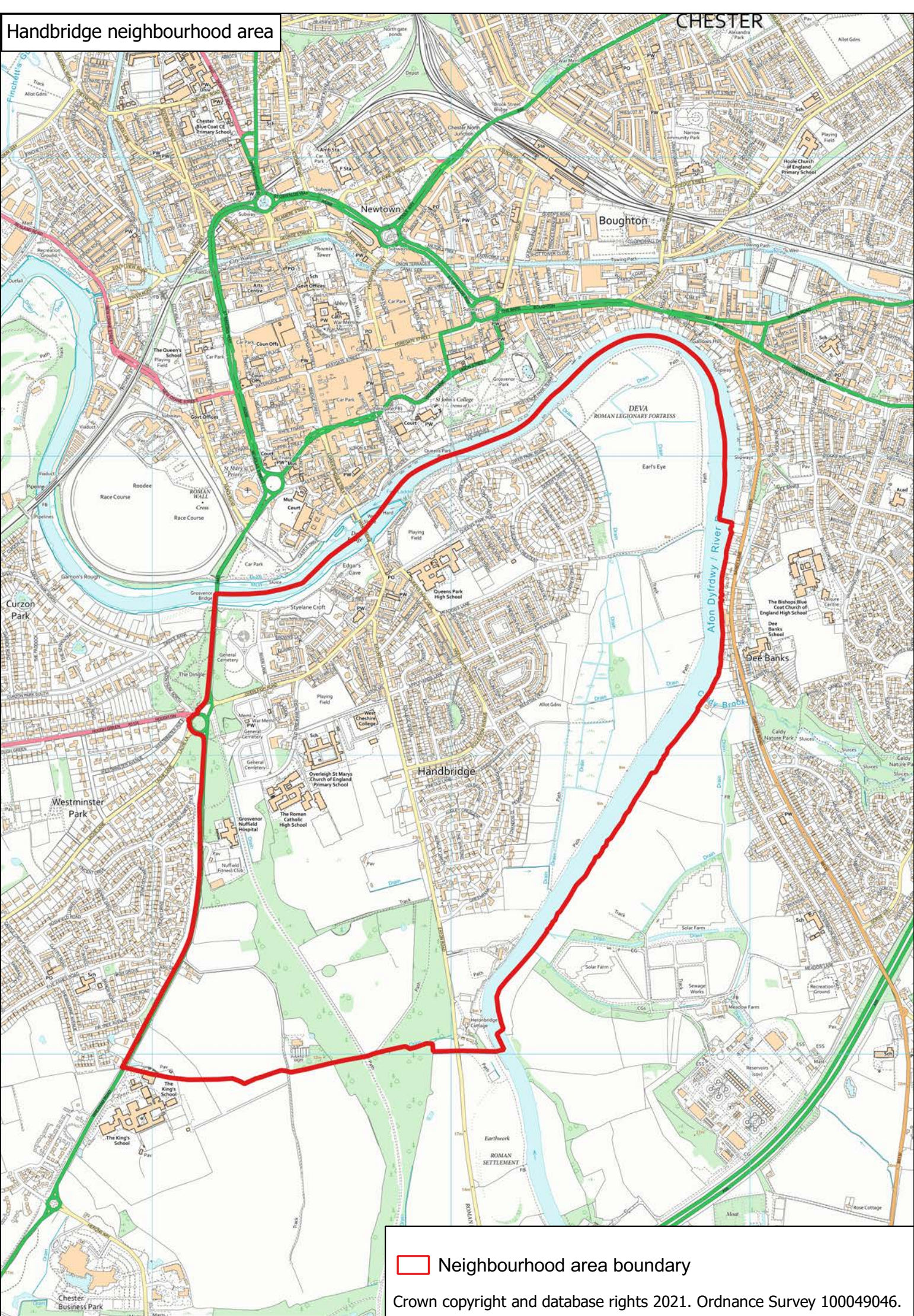
Date _____


Signed _____

(Chairperson)

(Secretary)

Handbridge neighbourhood area



 Neighbourhood area boundary