

Neighbourhood *Planning*



Neighbourhood Forum Description

What is a neighbourhood forum?

A group of local representatives who will be responsible for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. The neighbourhood forum should be established for the purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned.

When should a neighbourhood forum be set up?

If the neighbourhood plan is to be prepared for a parish, or part of a parish, or for an area including more than one parish, then the parish council will be responsible for its preparation. If the area is not covered by a parish, a neighbourhood forum will need to be set up.

Who should the neighbourhood forum be made up of?

There should be a minimum of 21 members. The type of members will depend on the location of the neighbourhood area and the aims of the neighbourhood plan. They could include local residents, business representatives, local landowners and anyone else with an interest in the area. Membership of the neighbourhood forum should be open to all those who live or work in the area and to elected members.

How is a neighbourhood forum designated?

The neighbourhood forum must be approved by the local planning authority. To gain approval, the following must be submitted to the local authority:

- Name of the proposed forum
- Written constitution
- Name of the neighbourhood area and map which identifies the area
- Contact details of at least one member of the forum to be made public
- Statement which explains how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions in section 61F(5) of the 1990 Act and is a relevant body.

Where a valid application is made, the local planning authority must advertise the application for six weeks and seek representations. The local planning authority may decline to consider any additional neighbourhood forum applications in an area where a forum has been designated and the designation has not expired or been withdrawn.

When making a decision on the neighbourhood forum, the local planning authority must have regard to whether the forum has secured (or taken reasonable steps to attempt to secure) that its membership includes at least one person who lives in the area, one who works in the area and one elected member. It should also take account of whether the members are from different places in the neighbourhood area and from different sections of the community. The local planning authority will assess whether the purpose of the forum reflects (in general terms) the character of the area.