Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

Adopted at the General Meeting on 18th November 2021. Amended at General Meeting on 1st July 2025.

1. Name

1.1. The Neighbourhood Forum shall be known as 'Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Neighbourhood Forum') as defined in the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act').

2. The Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Area

2.1. The Neighbourhood Area shall be the area shown in the map in Appendix A

2.2. The Neighbourhood Area is that which was defined for the expired Norwich Northern City Centre Area Action Plan (2010). The River Wensum forms the Southern and Western Boundary between Whitefriars Bridge and adjacent Oak Street in line with the former city wall; then following the Mancroft ward boundary along Bakers Road, Magpie Road and Bull Close Road up to where it meets Charlton Road; then Charlton Road and Whitefriars back to Whitefriars Bridge.

2.3. As defined, the Neighbourhood Area falls entirely within the boundary of Norwich City Council, being wholly contained within the Mancroft Ward. It is also wholly contained within the Mancroft Division of Norfolk County Council, and the Norwich South Parliamentary Constituency.

Between Whitefriars Bridge and New Mills the Neighbourhood Area is bordered by the River Wensum for which the Statutory Planning Authority is the Broads Authority.

3. Purpose

The Purposes of Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum shall be:

3.1 to prepare the statutory Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2 to protect and enhance the inherent qualities of the Neighbourhood Area and to promote and improve the cultural, creative, social, economic and environmental well-being of the Neighbourhood Area.

3.3 The Neighbourhood Forum aims to give a voice to the residents and those who work in the area and to listen to representatives of businesses and organisations of the Neighbourhood and to reflect their aspirations and concerns:

- to enable the identification, and if possible, delivery of solutions to the challenges it faces
- to facilitate better communication of local interests with Norwich City Council, the Broads Authority and other bodies
- to promote a sustainable, mixed and inclusive community

4. Commitments to diversity and inclusivity

4.1. The Neighbourhood Forum will respect all differences including gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability and income, and will act without discrimination.

4.2. Neighbourhood Forum will provide all residents and people who work in the Neighbourhood Area the opportunity to join the Neighbourhood Forum

4.3. The Neighbourhood Forum will actively seek individual membership to represent the demographic make-up and geography of the Neighbourhood

4.4. Acknowledging the Neighbourhood Area as a hub for the wider locality, when developing the Neighbourhood Plan the Neighbourhood Forum will endeavour to engage with those coming to the area to work, study, shop, design/produce/make, socialise, or for entertainment or other purposes to better understand how the neighbourhood functions.

5. Affiliations

5.1. The Neighbourhood Forum shall not be affiliated to any political party or political organization, or specific religious organization or sectarian group, or developer.

5.2. The Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum is not related to or affiliated to any former or current Norwich Over the Water organisations or schemes.

6. Responsibilities and Powers

6.1. The Neighbourhood Forum will work in close liaison with the Local Planning Authority (Norwich City Council), and in order to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan the Forum, will take into consideration, and build an evidence base from, all development and planning matters relevant to the Neighbourhood Area.

6.2. The Neighbourhood Forum will elect Officers which will include, but are not limited to, Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer from within the Membership. These Officers will be elected at a General Meeting of the Forum, by a simple majority.

6.3. To achieve its purposes the Membership of the Neighbourhood Forum will, at a General Meeting, set up an Administrative Committee to oversee the day to day running of the work of the Forum. The Neighbourhood Forum is responsible for oversight of the Administrative Committee and will set the Terms of Reference to include its

structure, appointments to the committee and delegation of powers to the committee.

The Administrative Committee will report to the Forum.

6.4. To achieve its purposes the Neighbourhood Forum may if appropriate initiate Neighbourhood Development Orders, or identify Assets of Community Value, or carry out any other permitted actions.

6.5. The Neighbourhood Forum may also seek to deliver wider improvements by working in partnership with residents, businesses, Norwich City Council, the Broads Authority and local organisations, as well as those further afield as necessary.

7. Governance,

7.1. The Neighbourhood Forum will follow the correct statutory neighbourhood planning process and will ensure that the plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for a Neighbourhood Plan.

7.2. The Neighbourhood Forum is responsible for approving each statutory stage of the Neighbourhood Plan by vote at a General Meeting.

7.3. The Neighbourhood Forum will take account of Data Protection and any other relevant regulation.

7.4. The Neighbourhood Forum shall take account of the following principles of governance

7.4.1. The Forum is clear about its aims and purpose and ensures that these are being delivered effectively and sustainably

7.4.2. The Forum ensures the Officers and Administrative Committee are effective and working in line with the Forum's aims and purposes

7.4.3. The Forum and its Officers will act with integrity

7.4.4. The Forum ensures its decision-making processes are informed, rigorous and timely

7.4.5. The Forum will endeavour to ensure the Administrative Committee works as an effective team, and has the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to progress the work of the Forum

7.4.6. The Forum is committed to diversity and inclusivity as under paragraph 4

7.4.7. The Administrative Committee is open and accountable to the Forum

8. Membership

8.1. Criteria for Membership of the Neighbourhood Forum

8.1.1. Membership of the Neighbourhood Forum shall be a minimum of 21 eligible individuals

8.1.2. Membership of the Neighbourhood Forum is open to:

a) all individuals who live in the Area

b) all individuals who work in the Area (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise)

c) City and County Councillors representing Mancroft, within which ward the Area lies.

8.2 Application for Membership

8.2.1 Each individual applicant for Membership shall submit a request to join which may be on-line or by mail to the Secretary which includes:

a) contact details
b) if resident within the Neighbourhood Area: home address including post code
c) if not resident in the Neighbourhood Area: address of workplace within the Neighbourhood Area including post code
d) GDPR consent for the Neighbourhood Forum to process their personal data for its lawful purposes

8.2.2 The Secretary of the Forum will have the right to request proof of eligibility for Membership

8.3 Rights and Responsibilities of Membership

8.3.1 The Membership will be invited to all AGM and General Meetings of the Neighbourhood Forum and will have the right to speak or ask questions.

8.3.2 Members will have voting rights of one vote per individual at all General Meetings.

8.3.3 Members are expected to take responsibility for the Governance and sound financial management of the Neighbourhood Forum through attending and voting at General Meetings. This will include decisions on the Regulation 14 and Submission versions of the Neighbourhood Plan and any other decisions required by the Statutory Process.

8.3.4 All Forum Members are required to consider any personal or financial conflicts of interest and declare these by notifying the Secretary as soon as is possible.

a) Any declared conflict of interest will be recorded in a Register of Interest
b) The concerned member may not vote in respect of matters in which they have declared a conflict of interest.

8.4. Termination of Membership

8.4.1 Members are required to inform the Secretary promptly of:

a) any change in their details as supplied under 4.2

b) if they wish to resign from the Forum

8.4.2 The Forum may, by a simple majority vote, refuse to accept, or may revoke, membership of any individual who in its opinion fails to meet the criteria for membership, or fails to act in accordance with the principles of Governance outlined above, or acts in a way inimical to the Forum's purpose.

Any person whose membership is revoked shall have the right to appeal to a General Meeting of the Forum.

9. Non-Member involvement with the Neighbourhood Forum

9.1. Supporters of the Neighbourhood Forum:

9.1.1. Individuals who have a material and ongoing interest in the area and are dedicated to the objectives and purpose of the Forum may become Supporters of the Neighbourhood Forum whether or not they live or work within the Neighbourhood Area.

9.1.2. Supporters will be encouraged to volunteer to be involved in activities of the Forum if they wish.

9.1.3. Supporters may be co-opted onto the Administrative Committee and serve on Working Groups

9.1.4. Supporters are not Members of the Forum for the purposes of this Constitution.

9.2 Mailing list:

Individuals who just wish to be kept informed may sign up to be on a mailing list whether or not they live or work in the Neighbourhood Area.

10. Communication

10.1. The Forum will maintain a website and email address.

10.2. The Forum will maintain a mailing list.

11. Finance

11.1 The signatories on any bank account which the Neighbourhood Forum holds will be Officers of the Forum.

11.2 The Neighbourhood Forum will apply for appropriate grant funding as needed for the furtherance of its purposes.

11.3 Funds controlled by the Forum shall only be used in furtherance of the Purpose & Objects of the Forum.

11.4 The Accounts will be presented to the Forum Members for approval at the Annual General Meeting.

12. Amendments and Dissolution

12.1. Amendments to this Constitution will be by decision of a General Meeting carried out in accordance with the rules for General Meetings above.

- Proposed amendments should be sent to the Secretary a minimum of 14 days before the General Meeting
- The Secretary will send out proposed amendments to the Membership and at least 7 days before the General Meeting and will alert the Administrative Committee and the Local Planning Authority to proposed amendments

12.2 The life-time of the Neighbourhood Forum will be 5 years as set out in planning legislation

12.3 A formal review of the functions and achievements of Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum will be carried out five years after its formation.

12.4 Following such review, and consultation with its members, the Neighbourhood Forum will decide the most appropriate way of supporting its Neighbourhood's aspirations

12.5 The Neighbourhood Forum may be dissolved prior to the end of its five-year life, by decision of a General Meeting specifically called for this purpose and carried out in accordance with section 4 above, with the exception that such a vote will only be carried if supported by two thirds or more of those voting.

12.6 At the time of dissolution, any property or funds held by Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum will be:

- subject to the agreement of the Members at General Meeting, allocated to one or more nominated organisations set up to continue the work of Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum,
  or
- in the absence of any such organisation and subject to any statutory regulations, distributed equally to local voluntary or charitable organisations

13. Meetings

13.1 Annual General Meetings will be held yearly or as close to yearly as practicable and should be no longer than 15 months apart.

13.2 Further General Meetings of the Forum will be called when needed, by the Administrative Committee. In particular, meetings of the Forum will be called whenever there is Statutory Business or other business requiring a vote. Meetings should be at intervals not greater than 6 months.

An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by 5 members of the Forum applying to the Secretary.

13.3 The quorum for a General Meeting shall be 14 members and notice should be given at least 21 days in advance.

13.4 At any General Meeting of the Forum each Member present will have one vote. Only Members are allowed to vote. Decisions of General Meetings will be by simple majority except in the cases set out in section 9 (Amendments & Dissolution) below. Votes will be by a show of hands or online poll (where meetings are held online).

13.5 The Chair (or the Vice Chair when acting as Chair) will have a casting vote at any General Meeting

13.6 Members will declare and abstain from voting on any matter in which they have a direct financial interest, or a conflict of interest where a Neighbourhood Plan policy would affect the business interests of a Forum member.

13.7 The Secretary is responsible for the minutes of General Meetings and will ensure that declarations of interest or conflicts of interest are recorded and that the minutes are drafted and circulated to invite comments on accuracy within two weeks and ensure that a process of approval is maintained at the next meeting.

Appendix A: Map of the Neighbourhood Area

Appendix B: Duties of Officers of the Forum

A. The **Chair** of the Neighbourhood Forum, shall:

i. call and chair regular meetings of the Neighbourhood Forum and have a casting vote on elections and resolutions where necessary

ii. act on behalf of the 'Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum' and represent it externally when required, or delegate other appropriate person to do so. This would most usually be the Vice Chair, but where there is an area of specialist expertise an alternative person may be chosen.

iii. interpret the constitution. The Chair's interpretation may be overturned by a simple majority of the Membership at a General Meeting.

iv. have the power to take decisions on urgent matters between meetings of the Forum, but should attempt to liaise with other Officers and Forum members where at all possible.

v. act as joint signatory on the 'Norwich Over the Wensum Neigbourhood Forum' bank account.

B. The **Vice Chair** of the Forum, shall:

i. deputise for the Chair in all of these matters in his or her absence or on request.

ii. as required, act as joint signatory for the purposes of operating the Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum Bank or Credit Union Account.

C. The **Treasurer**, shall:

i. be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the 'Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum'

ii. be responsible for presenting a budget annually for the following year to the Membership at the AGM for approval.

iii. submit a detailed summary of the accounts at every Forum Meeting

iv. be responsible for the drafting of applications for grant funding, sign off on such applications and liaise with the accountable body where appropriate

v. act as a joint signatory on the 'Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum' account

D. The **Secretary** shall:

i. be responsible for organising General Meetings of the Forum, taking the minutes of these meetings, circulating them promptly to Forum Members and ensuring that a process of approval of the Minutes is maintained at the next general meeting.

ii. ensure that declarations of interest or conflicts of interest are recorded.

iii. be responsible for oversight of the member database and data protection

iv. act as joint signatory on the 'Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum' bank account if required