



**Officer Key Decision
Strategic Director Regeneration
and Environment**

**Report from the Strategic Director
of Regeneration and Environment**

**CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION FOR RE-DESIGNATION
OF HARLESDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA**

Wards Affected:	Harlesden, Kensal Green and Willesden Green.
Key Decision:	Yes
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	Three Appendix A: Appendix A - Neighbourhood Forum Area Requirements Appendix B: Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum Application Appendix C: Responses received from public consultation (below table)
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jordan Henderson, Planning Policy Officer, Planning Policy jordan.henderson@brent.gov.uk 020 8937 3932

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to consider the representations received in relation to the re-designation of a Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum, and their associated Neighbourhood Area.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property and Planning consider the representations received and responses as set out in Appendix C.

2.2 That the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property and Planning approve the re-designation of the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum and their Neighbourhood Area.

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 A steering group was set up in October 2014 to establish a Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum and draw up the Neighbourhood Area by consulting in the local area on a boundary and a constitution for the Forum. The Forum was formally launched in April 2015. The designation of Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum (HNF) and Neighbourhood Area was approved by Brent Council in August 2015 and by the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) in November 2015.
- 3.2 The HNF then went on to produce the Harlesden Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) (2019). This was subject to a referendum of the area's population on 30th May 2019, receiving 90% in favour of the Plan, and was subsequently adopted. The Plan follows the same boundary as the Neighbourhood Forum Area.
- 3.3 The HNP constitutes part of the Brent Statutory Development Plan, and is a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area. The HNF are a community group which advocate the implementation of the adopted HNP.
- 3.4 The designation of a Neighbourhood Forum ceases to have effect 5 years from it being made. In this case, the NHF lost its status as a forum on 28th September 2020. As a result, the HNF submitted a new application for re-designation as a Neighbourhood Forum on 14th October 2020.
- 3.5 The application has met the statutory requirements, as set out within Appendix A. This generally includes the Forum's written constitution, a map of the proposed Neighbourhood Area, a statement of its intentions, how they have sought to be inclusive, and that the Forum is reflective of the local populace and has sufficient numbers. A statement which demonstrates how the applicants have met these requirements is included in Appendix B.
- 3.6 The proposed written constitution is detailed, and is reflective of their Charitable Incorporated Organisation Constitution. The objectives of the Forum have been carried forward from their previous application, and are reflective of the general thrust of the adopted HNP, being to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. The Forum also has 220 members, far exceeding the statutory requirement for a minimum of 21 – drawn from a wide area/ representative of the area and characteristics of the population.
- 3.7 The Neighbourhood Area proposed has not been amended since the Forum's previous designation, and therefore continues to reflect the HNP area. This does not overlap with any other existing or proposed Neighbourhood Areas within the Borough. Appendix B includes a statement outlining why this boundary is considered to be appropriate. The Area occupies land in the Local Planning Authorities of both LB Brent, and the OPDC. The OPDC therefore have to determine the re-designation of the proposed Forum also, undertaking the same statutory process as the LB Brent.
- 3.8 The Forum have consulted on their application with the local community. This was done to ensure that the proposed boundary is considered to be

appropriate, and that the objectives and constitution continue to reflect the values of the community. It also serves to raise awareness of the Forum's proposed activities, and increase the number and diversity of its membership, enabling it to be more representative of the proposed area. This has been demonstrated in their statement in Appendix B.

Consultation Process

- 3.9 The Council consulted for 8 weeks from 10th December 2020 to 4th February 2021. This was longer than the statutory minimum of 6 weeks. The extra 2 weeks was considered appropriate due to it spanning the festive Christmas period. It placed a public notice in the Brent and Kilburn Times and at sites across the proposed Neighbourhood Area, with documents made available at both Wembley and Harlesden libraries. It advertised the consultation on its website and sent notifications to statutory consultees and those on the Local Plan consultation list.

Representations

- 3.10 Three responses were received on the consultation, each from statutory consultees. These were from Highways England, Natural England, and Sport England. These representations did not wish to comment on the re-designation of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum, or its proposed Neighbourhood Area. The representations received, and the officer comments, are included within Appendix C.

Next steps

- 3.11 Due to the proposed Neighbourhood Area boundary being within more than one Local Planning Authority (LB Brent & OPDC), the Council has 20 weeks from the date the application was first made public to make a decision. The deadline for decision is therefore 22nd April 2021.
- 3.12 In making a decision, the Council must consider whether or not the application for re-designation as a Neighbourhood Forum, and Neighbourhood Area satisfy the requirements set out within Appendix A.
- 3.13 The previous HNF were considered by the Council to be a positive force, whom share the Council's wider aspirations for the area. They produced the HNP, and seek to ensure its implementation in the furtherance of local social, economic and environmental goals.
- 3.14 As stated within paragraph 3.5, it is considered that the applicant has met these statutory requirements, and it is therefore recommended that the proposed Neighbourhood Forum and Area are designated.
- 3.15 Once a decision is made, it will need to be made publically available as soon as is practicable on the Council's webpage. If the decision is made to refuse the application, a statement will need to be produced which outlines the reasons for refusal.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to assist the Neighbourhood Forum in the production and implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Given the HNF have already produced the HNP, it is considered unlikely that the re-designation of the HNF will result in a significant increase in workload for the Planning Policy team.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The process for Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area designations are set out within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The process undertaken here has been consistent with these prescribed regulations.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector equality duty under section 149. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council must, in exercising its functions, have “due regard” to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

6.2 The production of the HNF application has involved wide consultation of the local area, including for those who live, work and visit the area. The application demonstrates how it has achieved this, and how participants and members are derived from a wide range of backgrounds as they relate to the above protected characteristics, and are broadly representative of the proposed Neighbourhood Area.

6.3 In achieving diversity, the forum represents the objectives of the community as a whole, allowing the broader community to have a say in specific local matters which are likely to impact them directly. This provides a valuable resource for the Council in gauging the needs and wants of the local community, and how its actions are reflective of these.

6.4 Brent is one of the most ethnically diverse Local Planning Authorities in the UK, and the proposed HNF area has a high proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. The area also experiences high levels of deprivation, being inhabited by some of Brent’s most vulnerable residents. The forum will therefore serve as a platform for improving the well-being of these most disadvantaged individuals, uplifting them and improving their access to opportunities.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 The Local Ward members were notified upon receiving the application for re-designation of the HNF. They were also consulted by the HNF themselves. Membership of the HNF is also open to local ward Councillors. The Councillors

are broadly supportive of the HNF, its previous work, and its re-designation going forward.

- 7.2 In terms of awareness raising for the consultation, a public notice was placed in the local press. There was a press release and awareness raising through the Council's website, plus letters sent to statutory consultees and those on the Council's local plan consultation database. The documents were made available in libraries and on the Council's website. There were some public notices placed across the Neighbourhood Area.

Report sign off:

Alan Lunt

Strategic Director of Regeneration
and Environment.