

KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, 2017-2036

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Localism Act 2011 offered communities a new opportunity to establish a neighbourhood forum that would have a greater say in the planning process and local matters.

Governance

The Knightsbridge Association (KA) asked Westminster City Council (WCC) to designate the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Area (KNA) which they did on 27 March 2014.

Setting up a 'neighbourhood forum' is more complicated. So the KA and others decided that a new legal entity would be established and apply to become the designated neighbourhood forum for the KNA. The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum (Forum or KNF) was established therefore as a company limited by guarantee in 2015 with directors representing residents, businesses and cultural and education institutions. Councillor Baroness Robathan is also director.

The Forum's application was successful and WCC designated it on 21 July 2015 as the ninth within the City of Westminster. Among other things, the Localism Act gives the Forum an exclusive right for five years to produce a neighbourhood plan for the KNA subject to conditions including achieving over 50% support from residents voting in a Referendum.

Powers and responsibilities

Under the Localism Act neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies (paragraph 184, National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF)). However, once a neighbourhood plan ... is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in [WCC's] Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict (paragraph 185, NPPF).

Consultations and process

After two informal consultations to identify community priorities, the Forum launched the statutory Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) consultation on its proposed plan for Knightsbridge on 8 December 2016 in three sections: Part One – Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan; Part Two – Knightsbridge Management Plan; and Part Three – Knightsbridge Evidence Base.

Please consider the proposals on our website at knightsbridgeforum.org and support our consultation by emailing us at consultation@knightsbridgeforum.org by 5.00pm on Wednesday 15 February 2017. Please tell us your full postcode and whether you live, work study or visit in Knightsbridge when you reply.

Our vision, values and objectives

Our vision is to make Knightsbridge the best residential and cultural place in London in which to live, work, study and visit.

It is underpinned by six values: Community; Conserving; Clean, safe and quiet; Iconic; Inspirational; and International.

We propose to achieve our vision through 10 objectives organised under five themes. These are:

Character

1. Enhance the special character of Knightsbridge including its architecture, heritage, townscape and trees while recognising its status internationally as a prime residential neighbourhood and centre for retail, culture and education
2. Improve the public realm and enhance and restore heritage features
3. Protect and enhance Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) including the Hyde Park Barracks land

Community

4. Promote the sense of community
5. Protect and enhance existing residential amenity and mix

Culture and education

6. Foster an environment that enables our world-class cultural and educational institutions to thrive as centres of learning and innovation within a flourishing community

Public spaces and utilities

7. Enable active travel and personal mobility
8. Encourage superb public transport
9. Encourage superb utilities and communications infrastructure

Healthy environment and healthy people

10. Be an exemplar in sustainable city living by complying fully with international laws, standards, guidelines and best practice

Some 50 policies underpin these objectives. We are proposing many actions under 'Neighbourhood management' to address community priorities that are outside 'planning'.

We have also defined principles that should be applied when decisions are taken about spending the monies raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy or section 106 payments from developers. A list of projects is proposed based on previous consultations.

Examples of the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum's priorities and timescales

	2020	2025	Lifetime of plan
Neighbourhood Plan policies			
Enforcing Local or Neighbourhood Stress Area	X		
Protecting and enhancing Hyde Park Barracks	X	X	X
Protecting and creating residential units	X		
Knightsbridge Code of Construction Practice	X		
Clean air and renewable energy	X	X	
Protecting and enhancing trees	X		
Neighbourhood Management actions			
Refresh neighbourhood plan	X	X	X
Strict licensing and planning use classifications	X		
20mph speed limit on Local Roads	X		
Clean, safe and quiet enforced	X		
Engage RBKC on cross-border matters	X		
Develop electric charging infrastructure	X		
Spending priorities e.g. CIL, section 106			
Principles			
Support objectives in the plan			X
Strategic and long-term in the public realm			X
Ensure robust utilities e.g. drains and lights			X
Choose a portfolio of projects including transport and highways			X
Give preference close to the development			X
Community not individual benefit			X
Mitigate impacts of high volumes of visitors on local people			X
Improve quality of life for residents			X
Examples of specific projects			
Restore heritage assets e.g. lamps	X		
Support Re-Imagining Albertopolis Initiative	X		
Audit and improve utilities and report progress annually	X		
Standard 'Tree management plan' and tree planting	X		
Implement 20 mph speed limit on Local Roads and 'Copenhagen crossings' at junctions	X		
Provide ample secure cycle parking	X		
Improve quality and maintenance of street furniture	X		
Open access electric charging in parking spaces	X		
Reduce emissions from Grade 1 buildings	X		
Enforce 'clean, safe and quiet' to the full extent of the law	X		
Provide public lavatories or support public schemes	X		
Support communal recycling and waste facilities	X		

Next steps

The Forum was the first in the City of Westminster to launch a statutory Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) consultation on a draft neighbourhood plan on 8 December 2016.

The Pre-Submission Consultation is due to close about five weeks after the KA's Annual General Meeting on 15 February 2017. We will then address responses and revise the Forum's draft neighbourhood plan with a view to submitting it formally to WCC in Spring 2017. A possible timetable thereafter might be:

Second Quarter in 2017	WCC holds (another!) six week public consultation (Regulation 16)
Second or Third Quarter	Planning examiner reviews draft neighbourhood plan
Third or Fourth Quarter	Referendum

It is vital that we get plenty of responses to each public consultation to make sure we have got the plan right and can demonstrate support for it. The planning examiner may take this evidence into account when he assesses it. Most important, we will need a strong turnout and support in the Referendum. If a majority votes in favour in the referendum WCC must then 'make' the plan (bring it into legal force) within eight weeks unless there is a credible legal challenge.

We may update or improve our plan before our five year initial term expires. In any event we expect to ask WCC to renew our designation for a further five years in 2020 and thereafter.

Going forward, the Forum aims to 'write the rules' in the neighbourhood development plan that the KA, WCC and others would 'enforce'. We also want to participate in decisions on the spending of developer contributions in Knightsbridge and in follow up actions and other matters.

Join and donate

The KNF is open to new members who live, work or study in Knightsbridge or who are elected members of WCC representing Knightsbridge. You can apply free online at knightsbridgeforum.org.

We expect it will cost over £100,000 to reach the Referendum on our neighbourhood plan. So far, donations and grants have been received from the KA, the Knightsbridge Residents Management Company, the Bulgari Hotel, the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, Locality (on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government), 10 Lancelot Place and the Chairman.

You can see the latest draft of our plan and news, get in touch or join the Forum free at knightsbridgeforum.org. We're also on Twitter at @KnightsbridgeNF and Facebook at facebook.com/KnightsbridgeForum. As you can see above, the Forum has marvellous opportunities but must undertake a substantial amount of further work to realise them. Please contact us if you are interested in joining, making a donation or helping.

We are excited to have launched the first statutory consultation on our draft neighbourhood plan. But there is another year of work ahead. So please don't forget – your neighbourhood needs you!