



City of Westminster

# Cabinet Member Report

|                           |                                                                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Decision Maker:</b>    | Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development                        |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2025                                             |
| <b>Classification:</b>    | General Release                                                             |
| <b>Title:</b>             | Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum Re-Designation 2026-31                    |
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>    | Knightsbridge & Belgravia                                                   |
| <b>Key Decision:</b>      | No                                                                          |
| <b>Financial Summary:</b> | The costs of approving this application will be met within existing budgets |
| <b>Report of:</b>         | Executive Director of Corporate Services                                    |

---

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Westminster City Council designated the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum as the responsible body for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Area on 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2015. Under section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Schedule 9 the Localism Act 2011), Neighbourhood Forum designations expire after five years. The forum was redesignated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 after the initial designation expired. The first re-designation expired on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025 and therefore the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum have applied to be re-designated.
- 1.2 In line with previous consultation activities on re-designation applications, public consultation was carried out between 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to 19<sup>th</sup> August 2025. The consultation received six responses and no objections to the application were made.
- 1.3 A Cabinet Member decision is required to re-designate the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum and publish a designation notice on the website as per our statutory duties.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development:
- 2.2 Approve the re-designation of the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum for a further period of five years.
- 2.3 Authorise the Director of Policy and Strategy to formally publish a designation notice.

## **3. REASONS FOR DECISION**

- 3.1 Section 61F(7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted into that Act by Schedule 9 of the Localism Act 2011, sets out the conditions that a Neighbourhood Forum must meet, as well as the considerations that a local planning authority must take into account when determining an application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Forum. These legislative aspects are set out in greater detail in Section 6 of this report.
  - 3.2 This legislation states that a local planning authority may designate an organisation or body as a Neighbourhood Forum if the authority is satisfied that a number of conditions have been met, as set out in the table below. The existing Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum (the Forum) meets all of these conditions, which is evidenced by the supporting documentation provided as part of their application.
-

| Condition                                                                                                                                                                     | Compliance |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic or environmental well-being of an area?                                                    | Yes        |
| Membership open to individuals who live or work in the area (or are elected members of the City Council)?                                                                     | Yes        |
| Membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom lives or works (or is an elected member) in the area?                                                            | Yes        |
| The neighbourhood forum has a written constitution?                                                                                                                           | Yes        |
| Has secured (or taken reasonable steps to attempt to secure) membership that includes at least one individual living, working or elected to represent the neighbourhood area? | Yes        |
| Whose membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area and from different sections of the community in that area?                                          | Yes        |
| Whose purpose reflects (in general terms) the character of that area?                                                                                                         | Yes        |

- 3.3 The Council is required to have regard to whether membership is drawn from different places in the applicable Neighbourhood Area and from different sections of the community in that area, as well as to assess whether the Neighbourhood Forum reflects, in general terms, the character of the area.
- 3.4 Under Section 61F(5)(e) of the Town and Country Planning Act, the Local Planning Authority is permitted to add any compliance conditions deemed necessary to assess a potential Forum's Neighbourhood Area, in line with the conditions set out in section 61F(5). Section 61F(7) stipulates how the Local Planning Authority should make the determination on whether to designate or redesignate a Neighbourhood Forum.
- 3.5 Due to this, the Council has sought further information than was previously sought in re-designations prior to 2025, to demonstrate the Forum's membership is fully representative of the area. This is the third redesignation application to proceed to a decision that the Council has actively sought such information to ensure the forums are representative of their neighbourhood area. This includes:
- An anonymised map denoting the locations of at least 21 members from the neighbourhood forum, to illustrate geographical diversity; and
  - A statement or report to evidence Section 61F Authority to act on behalf of a Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.6 The report demonstrated that the Forum, as far as possible, has drawn its membership of 87 members from different sections of the community in the area. 77% of its members are the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Area, 15% are cultural members, 6% are business members and 2% are Westminster elected members. Two of the three ward councillors for the Knightsbridge and Belgravia ward are also members, and one has a seat on the board.

- 3.7 The submitted map depicts the geographic distribution of members throughout the Neighbourhood Area. Although membership is not uniformly distributed, it demonstrates that the Forum has made efforts to be spatially representative. The Forum has also provided a comparison between the Neighbourhood Area and the demographic composition. Although it is not directly reflective of the demographic composition of the Neighbourhood Area, the Forum has made, and continues to make, efforts to encourage those who live, work or study in the area to become members of the Forum. This includes quarterly and annual publications that are circulated to some 800 people who live, work or have strong interest in the area. To collect the findings for the application, the Forum only had an 18% return rate on their survey of members, so while the findings provide useful insight, they may not fully capture the overall representativeness of the wider membership. Notwithstanding, this level of response is typical for member surveys and is considered sufficient to allow the application to proceed.
- 3.8 In addition to the work undertaken to promote membership, the Forum are also keen not to duplicate or compete with the work of other Knightsbridge residents' groups. Instead, the Forum chooses to focus on strategic planning and development plan related matters, which may indicate its lower membership rates owing to a specific focus on a niche subject area.
- 3.8 The submitted application for re-designation states that the Forum was established to promote and improve the social, economic, and environmental well-being of Knightsbridge through monitoring and implementation of their adopted Neighbourhood Plan. The plan was formally adopted on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018, therefore becoming part of Westminster's development plan and operational in the designated Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of assessing planning applications. The Forum continues to fulfil their primary objectives in preparing and having by continuing their involvement in strategic and development planning by undertaking the following activities:
- Overseen the adoption of the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan (made December 2018);
  - Commencing a review of the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan;
  - Commenting selectively on significant planning and licensing applications, including major developments at 2-8 Rutland Gate and 1 Knightsbridge Green;
  - Responding to national, regional and local consultations on relevant matters, as well as other neighbourhood plan consultations in Westminster;
  - 'Hole in the NCH project - applied for in October 2019, completed March 2021;
  - Lighting and public realm upgrade for the Royal Albert Hall NCIL project –applied for in November 2021; completed in 2022;
-

- Refurbishment of heritage lights along Kensington Road NCIL project – application submitted and validated, Q1 2025;
- Updating the ‘Knightsbridge Evidence Base’ (February 2024);
- Undertaking a five-year review of the impact of the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan (‘KNP’) September 2024). In the Forum’s opinion it successfully influenced planning outcomes in the KNA (whether supporting planning permissions or refusals)

3.8 The public consultation on the Forum’s re-designation received 12 responses. Of those, 10 representations indicated their support for the proposal, whilst no responses lodged an objection. Whilst this represents a low level of responses, this is often typical of similar consultations. Consultation activities met statutory requirements as set out in section 8 of this report, and the results demonstrate there was no objection to the continued designation of the Forum.

3.9 Neighbourhood Planning is a key area to support the vision for a Fairer Council tranche of the broader Fairer Westminster strategy as it is an avenue where the Council can enable residents and businesses within the city to respond to planning issues and positively influence development within their local area, which the re-designation of the Forum aids to deliver.

## 4. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 The Localism Act 2011 and The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 enable communities to undertake Neighbourhood Planning. Primarily, this includes the opportunity to develop a statutory Neighbourhood Plan that will become part of the planning framework for their area and can establish ‘permitted development’ rights through a mechanism known as a Neighbourhood Development Order. To be able to undertake Neighbourhood Planning, a local community group must firstly apply to designate a Neighbourhood Area, and then secondly apply to be designated as the representative Neighbourhood Forum. The process for re-designating a Neighbourhood Forum become necessary as designations only last for a prescribed five-year period. The process for re-designation mirrors that of the original designation, with the added consideration of an increased emphasis on representativeness within the application process. A summary of this process is set out below.

4.2 Neighbourhood Forums have ‘open’ membership consisting of a minimum of 21 individuals who live, work, or are elected members of the local authority, within the area. The Forum should represent the diversity and

character of the community, with a wide range of members including residents, businesses, amenity societies, local interest groups, and voluntary sector members. Neighbourhood Forum applications should constitute a statement of intent as well as a statement setting out how the Forum meets the legislative requirements, such as consisting of a minimum of 21 members etc (see Section 3). Once a Neighbourhood Forum application has been received, the Council must publicise the application for a minimum period of six weeks to enable representations to be submitted. A formal decision to re-designate must then be taken within 13 weeks of the start of such consultation, which in this instance is by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

- 4.3 Once a Neighbourhood Forum is in place, they can formally undertake Neighbourhood Planning activities and begin to prepare their Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order. Where Forums have already prepared a Neighbourhood Plan, they will continue to act as a consultee on planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area and monitor the effectiveness and implementation of the policies in the plan. They can also choose to update their Neighbourhood Plan in the future.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from this application. Tasks associated with reviewing and publicising the application, as well as preparing the necessary reports equate to approximately 1-2 days of officer time. All work undertaken by officers has been done within existing budgets.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Section 61F(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Schedule 9 of the Localism Act 2011, states that a local planning authority may designate an organisation or body as a Neighbourhood Forum if satisfied that it meets the following conditions:

- 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).
  - Its membership is open to –
    - Individuals who live in the Neighbourhood Area concerned;
    - Individuals who work there (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise); and
    - 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.
-

- Its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom –
  - Lives in the Neighbourhood Area concerned;
  - Works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise); or
  - Is an elected member of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the Neighbourhood Area concerned.
- It has a written constitution.
- Such other conditions as may be prescribed.

6.2 Section 61F(7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 also states that in determining whether to designate a Neighbourhood Forum, the local planning authority must have regard to the desirability of designating an organisation or body which has:

- Secured (or taken steps to secure) membership from each of the required categories (i.e. people who live or work in the area or are elected members);
- Membership that is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area concerned and from different sections of the community in that area; and
- A purpose that reflects (in general terms) the character of the area

6.3 Section 61F(5)(e) permits the local planning authority to impose such other conditions as may be prescribed, in order to demonstrate compliance with these requirements. Due to this, the Council now requires Forums to provide a report demonstrating how the Forum's demographic aspects of the Neighbourhood Area: age, gender, household composition, identity, tenure of household, economic activity status, and level of education, using available ward or census data. The report should also explain the steps taken to ensure membership includes representation from each of these categories.

6.4 Regulation 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 states that as soon as possible after designating a Neighbourhood Forum, the Council must publish the following information on its website (and in such other manner considered likely to bring it to the attention of those who live, or work in the Neighbourhood Area):

- The name of the Neighbourhood Forum;
  - A copy of the written constitution of the Neighbourhood Forum;
-

- The name of the Neighbourhood Area to which the designation relates; and
- Contact details for at least one member of the Neighbourhood Forum.

- 6.5 If deciding to 'Neighbourhood Forum, the Council must e a publish a statement setting out the decision and the reasons for making such a decision, as well as details of where and when the refusal statement may be inspected.
- 6.6 It is intended that a formal designation notice will be published under the delegated authority of the Director of Policy and Strategy following the Cabinet Member decision in relation to the re-designation of the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum.
- 6.7 A Neighbourhood Forum designation ceases to have effect five years after the date that the designation was made. At this point an organisation or body would be able to re-apply for Neighbourhood Forum status.
- 6.8 A designated Neighbourhood Forum can also give notice to the Council that it no longer wishes to be designated as the Neighbourhood Forum for a Neighbourhood Area. In this instance, the Council would have to withdraw the formal designation of the Neighbourhood Forum and must publish a statement setting out the details of the withdrawal, including details of where this statement can be inspected.
- 6.9 In addition, the Council can also withdraw a Neighbourhood Forum designation if it is considered that the body is no longer meeting the conditions to which it was designated or any other criteria that the Council had regard to in making the designation.

## **7. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are implications on staff resources duty to support Neighbourhood Planning. This relates to the management of the Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum application processes, as well as in providing support to the Neighbourhood Forum in the preparation of or updates to their Neighbourhood Plan, which is a technical process and thus a resource intensive task. In addition, the Council will be obliged to carry out the legal compliance assessment of any revisions to the Neighbourhood Plan, including supporting the examination process and coordinating any future local referendum, if necessary.
- 7.2 The Council's obligation to support is authorities given the large number of Neighbourhood Areas and Neighbourhood Forums within Westminster. Officers in the planning policy team continue to support the delivery of Neighbourhood Planning in Westminster, alongside other planning policy work.
-

## 8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 As required by the legislation, the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum re-designation application was formally published period of six weeks between 8<sup>th</sup> July and 19<sup>th</sup> August 2025.
- 8.2 Emails were then sent to relevant contacts from the Consultation Database notifying recipients of the consultations opening and providing links to the consultation materials. Those notified included ward councillors and other key stakeholders relevant to the Knightsbridge area, such as residents' groups, groups, businesses and landowners.
- 8.3 Consultation on the application received 12 responses. Three responses were received from other Neighbourhood Forums, three were received from residents of the area, as well as other comments from a resident's association, a cultural group, a local business and a major landowner. Two responses were from statutory planning consultees, however, these chose not to comment on the proposal and lodged non-objection.
- 8.4 While the overall response to the consultation was modest, this is typical for such exercises, and it nonetheless represents the highest number of responses received for any recent re-designation application, with support overwhelmingly in favour. The consultation meets the statutory requirements and demonstrates broad support across various stakeholder groups for the proposal to re-designate.

## 9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The equalities impact of re-designating the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum have been considered and it is concluded that there are none, particularly given the efforts of the Forum to increase the openness and diversity of their membership.

**If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect one of the background papers, please contact:**

Lucy Russell, Policy Officer (Planning)  
[lrussell@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:lrussell@westminster.gov.uk)

## Approval

| Name and Title                                            | Date sent  | Date approved |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Director of Town Planning and Building Control            | 21/08/2025 | 3/09/2025     |
| Executive Director for Regeneration, Economy and Planning | 21/08/2025 | 3/09/2025     |
| Finance Manager                                           | 21/08/2025 | 3/09/2025     |
| Senior Solicitor                                          | 21/08/2025 | 29/08/2025    |
| Portfolio Advisor                                         | 04/09/2025 | 09/09/25      |

## **Appendices:**

Appendix A –Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Area Map

Appendix B –Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum Articles of Association

---

## Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

State nature of interest if any .....

.....

*(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled

..... and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....

Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment : .....

.....

\_\_\_\_\_

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, Strategic Director Finance and Performance and, if there are resources implications, the Strategic Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.