

SUMMARY

The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum (Forum) was established to give people who live, work or study in Knightsbridge the opportunity under the Localism Act 2011 to develop planning policy and influence neighbourhood management locally.

The Forum was designated by the City of Westminster (WCC) on 21 July 2015 with an exclusive mandate for five years to write a neighbourhood plan (the Plan) for the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Area (the Area) to sit alongside WCC's own development plan. The Area is bounded by Albert Gate, Brompton Road, Exhibition Road, Imperial College Road, Kensington Road, Kensington Gore, Knightsbridge, Queen's Gate and South Carriage Drive.

The Forum developed the Plan in six stages including: consulting the Knightsbridge Association and other long-established stakeholders on local needs and opportunities; holding an initial public exhibition and consultation to identify key issues; holding a second public exhibition several months later to establish priorities; writing its draft plan; holding a Pre-submission (Regulation 14) statutory consultation; and revising its plan before submitting it formally to WCC. The Plan was then subject to a further public consultation; and a planning examination; before a referendum of residents on the electoral roll.

The strongest message from residents, businesses and cultural institutions was a desire to preserve or improve the character and appearance of Knightsbridge and reinforce its sense of community. People want Knightsbridge to remain a special place to live, work, bring up children and enjoy life.

The Plan is focused around its vision, six values, five themes, 10 objectives and 40 policies which are now part of the formal development plan for Knightsbridge until 2037. It consists of planning policies to support our vision, values and objectives. Examples include: restoring heritage features; protecting and improving local green spaces; protecting and enhancing the Hyde Park Barracks land; improving utilities; and reducing air pollution.

In preparing the Plan, the Forum has also produced some supplementary material that goes beyond land use planning matters and therefore does not form part of the neighbourhood plan. This includes the Knightsbridge Management Plan (covering matters such as licensing and street cleanliness), the Knightsbridge Evidence Base Document (which provides technical information) and various best practice guidance on procedural matters such as community consultation, construction and tree management plans. Where these include matters that relate to planning applications rather than procedural matters, they will be treated as material considerations. Unlike the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan however, they will not have development plan status.

Several supporting documents and further evidence is available on the Forum's website at knightsbridgeforum.org. These include: a Basic Conditions Statement; a Consultation Report; a Sustainability Report; and Habitats Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment screening reports which are required by legislation or recommended by government guidance.

The Plan's vision is to make Knightsbridge the best residential and cultural place in London

in which to live, work, study and visit. This vision is supported by six values: community; conserving; clean, safe and quiet; iconic; inspirational; and international. Five themes are used to group 10 objectives:

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) and enable development of the Hyde Parks Barracks land as a strategic housing site

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

These themes and objectives aim to achieve sustainable development while meeting the needs of the community.

Local people and organisations identified principles and general and area-specific projects for the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other planning obligation monies. Principles include:

1. Support vision, values and objectives in the Plan
2. Strategic and long-term
3. Ensure robust utilities e.g. drainage and lighting
4. Choose a portfolio of projects including transport and highways
5. Give preference close to the development
6. Community not individual benefit
7. Mitigate impacts of high volumes of visitors on local people
8. Improve quality of life of residents

The Plan is likely to be used by local people, the Knightsbridge Association, planning officers at WCC, developers and many others to achieve positive outcomes. It is organised as follows:

- Overview sections which: include an Introduction; explain the Local context; describe the Vision, Values and Objectives; and explain how the Plan was developed and where it applies;
- Planning policies grouped under five themes. A table at the start of each section shows how policies align to objectives and the theme;
- Policies maps which show where some location-specific policies apply;
- Developer contributions which sets out how the community would like to see monies from the CIL and other planning obligations spent; and
- Appendices include: Glossary; United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; Walking and cycling priorities and projects; and CIL projects.

The above has been achieved through the support of the Knightsbridge Association and the invaluable efforts of the Forum's Directors and many people and organisations in the local community.

Going forward the Forum expects to: apply to WCC to renew its mandate; update its Plan from time to time; comment selectively on planning applications; undertake the actions in its Knightsbridge Management Plan at least once; and monitor and report annually or biennially on outcomes.

Please support these efforts to develop planning policy and influence neighbourhood management.