



# Neighbourhood Plan for Stoke

## Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

### Name

The name of the Forum shall be the Stoke Neighbourhood Forum, and of the Plan shall be the Neighbourhood Plan for Stoke.

### Area of Benefit

The area in which the Forum will pursue its objects is the Stoke (Stoke upon Trent) Neighbourhood Area, which is the area designated by Stoke-on-Trent City Council for which the Forum will produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

### Objects

The purpose of the Stoke Neighbourhood Forum is:

- To prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for Stoke (Stoke upon Trent) area;
- To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area of Stoke (Stoke upon Trent).
- Any other appropriate purpose agreed by the Forum.

### Powers

In furtherance of its objects the Forum may:

- Invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Forum, and to open a bank account to manage such funds;
- Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars etc.;
- Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations;
- Employ staff and volunteers as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the objects of the Forum;
- Take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objects of the Forum, including taking out any contracts, which it may see fit.

### Membership

- The Stoke Neighbourhood Forum will comprise at least 21 individuals as members.
- Membership is open to individuals who live or work in the Neighbourhood Area, or elected members for that area.
- Membership shall be drawn from different parts of the area and different sections of the community.
- Members can resign from the forum or be appointed to the Forum during the duration of the Forum.
- Membership is on a voluntary basis.

### Working Arrangements

#### Forum Meetings

Notes will be made of Forum meetings, to include decisions and action points, and will be circulated by email to all Forum members.

The Forum will meet six times a year (bi-monthly); the AGM will be publicised by posters and electronic formats at least 14 days prior to the meeting. To be quorate the Forum needs to have seven (7) members present at a meeting.

#### **Working group**

Separate groups may be appointed to meet, in addition to the Forum meetings, to discuss particular topics. Non-forum members may be co-opted to working groups.

#### **Decision Making**

Decisions will be made by simple majority vote; only Forum members may vote.

Whilst not able to vote, non-forum members may contribute information and advice relating to the topic in hand, to aid decision-making.

#### **Forum roles - The forum will initially appoint:**

- Forum co-ordinator to oversee the administration and organisation of the Forum and initial progress of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Town centre business liaison - to be the link between the Forum and the businesses
- Communications lead – to present professional and clear communications about the Forum and Plan
- Schools and community organisations liaison – to provide a link between the Forum and local organisations
- Treasurer – to be appointed once the Forum is designated

Roles may be amended and changed during the life of the Forum by discussion and agreement at the Forum meetings, according to the needs of the developing plan.

#### **Declaration of interests**

These are to be notified, along with any potential conflicts of interest, at the commencement of a Forum meeting by the member present, to be recorded in the meeting notes.

#### **Early Stages Working Group**

This group will manage the development of the Forum and drive forwards the initial stages of developing the plan. Membership will be on a voluntary basis from within the Forum members, to meet at least monthly initially. Powers to include grant fund raising, as needed to provide specialist consultancy support and advice to the Forum (e.g. from grant fund schemes particularly provided for Neighbourhood Forums).

#### **Financial management**

Initially to be provided through Second Look Stoke Ltd. To be reviewed by the Forum after six months, or earlier, should the Forum decide that the Neighbourhood Plan for Stoke should have its own bank account. Financial reports will be delivered to the Forum meetings.

#### **Alteration to the Constitution**

Changes to the constitution may be proposed and agreed via the Forum bi-monthly meeting, subject to majority vote.

#### **Duration**

The duration of the Stoke Neighbourhood Forum is 5 years from *(date to be notified)*.

Members may resign during the duration of the Forum's life and new members may be appointed, subject to guidelines for membership.