

Application for Redesignation of the

Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum

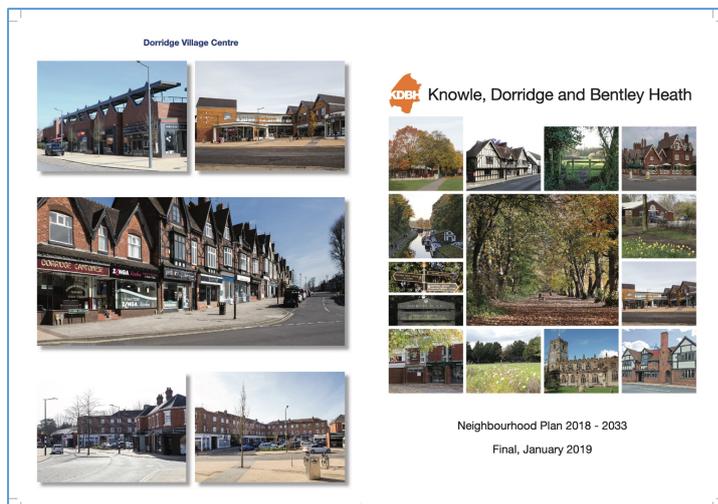
In October 2015, Solihull Council approved a Neighbourhood Area application covering the villages of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH). The Area is shown in Appendix 1. At the same time, the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum was formally designated as the qualifying body authorised to act for the Area.

By law, a Neighbourhood Forum's designation lasts for five years, following which time a further application must be made to the Local Authority, and repeat consultation undertaken, for a Neighbourhood Forum to renew its designation. The Neighbourhood Area designation does not need to be re-confirmed.

This application is therefore made to enable the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum (Forum) to continue its work engaging with the local community to enable successful implementation of the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan and help deliver the vision for future development in the KDBH Area.

1.0 Summary Achievements October 2015 - July 2020

The Forum, led by a small team of unpaid local volunteers, was set up to create a Neighbourhood Plan (Plan) for the three villages covering a community of almost 20,000 residents. Hence, our greatest achievement over this period has been to fulfil the hugely demanding legislative requirements, and overcome many challenges, to successfully deliver the Plan after over 4 years of hard work.



On 14 March 2019, the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan passed a Referendum of local people, with a 96% 'Yes' vote.

On 11 April 2014, a decision at the full Cabinet meeting of the Council (see Appendix 2), confirmed that the KDBH NP had been officially 'made'.

The Forum could not, of course, have achieved this without having also successfully:

- established a credible and respected presence in the community through effective liaison with a wide range of key stakeholders, including residents, local businesses and local community groups, Local Councillors, the Local Authority, developers and statutory consultees;

- developed a strong and effective communications network, reaching out to our community using digital, paper and face to face contact as part of regular public open meetings, special events and exhibitions, surveys, leaflet and poster campaigns, involvement in community events, newsletters, videos etc;
- made effective use of applied technology: most notably through our website kdbh-np.org and facebook [@kdbhforum](https://www.facebook.com/kdbhforum), but also including other interactive tools for community engagement;
- built a strong Forum community following. Our contacts list covers a diversity of individuals and groups across the three villages, drawn from a broad range of different backgrounds and perspectives (employed and retired; from age 17 to 70+; including Local Councillors). A Neighbourhood Forum is required in law to have 21 members. We now have:
 - over 1,100 formally registered individual members / subscribers (names and addresses provided) in a total of nearly 1400 contacts, including local businesses. Registered member representation continues to grow and is currently: Knowle: 604; Dorridge: 321; Bentley Heath: 76; Subscribers: 73
 - 1750 followers of our Facebook account.

Alongside delivery of the Plan, we are also proud of the work we have done working with the community, and in liaison with the Local Authority, to guide and represent residents in other development-related consultations, most notably Solihull Council's Draft Local Plan.

Solihull Civic Honours Award

In October 2019, we were honoured and hugely proud to be awarded a Group Community Involvement Award in the Solihull Civic Honours 2019. We collected the award on behalf of our KDBH Neighbourhood as something that recognises the part the whole community played in successfully delivering the Plan.



Developing the Plan certainly involved a lot of hard work.

More importantly for us, though, is that the award recognises that the Plan's success stems from the high level of involvement and active contribution made from individuals and groups across our whole community.



We count ourselves fortunate in always being able to rely on KDBH-ians to be both forthcoming and forthright in expressing their views!

The Forum Post Referendum

There is no requirement for a Neighbourhood Forum to continue once its Neighbourhood Plan has been ‘made’. Given our experience of the huge demands involved in developing the Plan, the Forum team did consider long and hard whether it wanted to continue. In August 2019, the Forum Steering Committee formally debated its future role. We recognised that successful adoption of the Plan does not automatically mean successful *implementation* of the Plan; and that the Forum’s community, Area and Plan knowledge built up in developing the Plan would be equally important in helping ensure successful implementation to achieve the community vision.

The Forum therefore determined that it should continue, with a revised focus and set of priorities based on successful Plan implementation. Since then, we have accordingly:

- transitioned Forum operations and activities (see below) from Plan Development to Plan Implementation and adapted our working practices and key stakeholder relations, eg. to reflect our role as a statutory consultee;
- established new processes enabling us to work closely and collaboratively with our two Resident Associations, particularly in relation to planning matters. To date the Forum has responded to 15 planning application consultations;
- successfully completed the rigorous process of registering the Knowle Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum CIO with the Charities Commission. A copy of the Registration Certificate is provided in the Appendix 3. This will be the Forum’s future legal structure, relevant to this application. All assets (we have no liabilities) will be transferred from our Limited Company that has operated since 2015, which will then be closed down.



The Forum’s decision to convert to charitable status was only taken after much careful analysis and deliberation. Ultimately, we determined that conversion to recognised charitable status as a CIO will secure the credibility of stakeholders, the local community and potential funders that is essential for us to achieve our goals in the new, implementation phase of the Plan.

Being a charity allows the Forum to seek external funding, develop partnerships with other like-minded organisations and to take a lead role in delivering projects to further its purposes to the benefit of the local community.

2.0 KDBH Neighbourhood Forum CIO Constitution

As of 22 July 2020, the Forum is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) operating as the ‘Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum CIO’ (the CIO), with Registered Charity Number 1190521. The Forum requests re-designation under this company name. Our CIO’s Constitution and supporting governance documents are attached.

Forum objectives continue to be underpinned by the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2033. The vision set out in the Plan, and its policies, remain central to Forum activities in helping to achieve sustainable development in the KDBH Neighbourhood Area.

3.0 Forum CIO Purposes

The Forum's charitable purposes are set out below, per our Constitution. In reading this, note that the term 'public' is required by the Charities Commission and, in our case, is defined as referring to all those who live, work or run a business in the KDBH Neighbourhood Area. These charitable purposes have been carefully thought through and worded so as to align directly with the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives, Plan Policies and related Community Actions.

- 1) *To promote for the public benefit, high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Area.*
- 2) *The protection, preservation, improvement and revitalisation of the natural and built environment in or affecting the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Area.*
- 3) *To promote sustainable development for the public benefit by:*
 - *the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;*
 - *the promotion of sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration.*

Sustainable development means "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

In furtherance of the above objects but not otherwise the trustees shall run a Neighbourhood Forum for Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath to promote and or improve the social economic and environmental well-being of the Area.

4.0 CIO Governance

Decisions affecting the CIO and use of its assets are made by its Trustees. The five Trustees appointed initially are all existing Directors / Steering Committee Members of the Limited Company, each with between 2-5 years' experience in that role, thus ensuring continuity over the period of transition from Limited Company to CIO. The Trustees are:

- Mrs Jane Aykroyd
- Mr Roger Cook
- Mr Andrew Marston
- Mrs Elisabeth Hedley
- Mr John Aykroyd

Note that the Forum CIO Constitution allows for up to 12 Trustee appointments. This recognises that, over time, the Forum's goal is to extend the Trustee group with representation from local people who can bring in-depth knowledge relating to important aspects of community life, eg. education, health, youth matters etc.

The Trustees may choose to delegate responsibility to sub-groups or individuals, who will become part of a wider 'Forum Team'. Everyone involved in Forum activity will be provided with the Forum's 'Code of Practice' (attached). This sets out the commitment to work at all times in the best interests of the Forum and, as a team, to work together in ways that enable efficient and effective operation.



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Each member of the Forum Team is expected to sign up to this Code of Practice, honouring both its content and spirit.

5.0 Forum Role and Remit 2020 - 2025

The Forum's purpose and four main areas of activity are described in the attached 'Activities and Benefits' document. Key points are summarised below.

In context, the Forum is unique as being the only local community body that represents and brings together views on future development of the three villages (and two Wards) in the KDBH Area. In planning terms particularly, having an overall view of new developments in the Area is important, as the three villages are closely connected, sharing many facilities and supporting infrastructures.

The Forum's primary role is to act as custodian of the Plan to provide assurance that, as far as possible, Plan objectives, policies and outcomes match present local need (including maintaining the balance of community facilities, eg for education, health, employment, leisure etc, to the demands of growth) without compromising the future.

In achieving its purposes, all Forum activities will continue to be informed by the KDBH community, who through the Plan have provided us with a collective view of present need, affirmed by Referendum. The continued emphasis on communication and engagement with the community will enable us to maintain our understanding of need as it may change over the course of time.

Taken together, the Forum's activities will be instrumental in helping to achieve the vision for the three villages, protecting what the community most values about its history while adapting and managing new development sympathetically to the needs of the future.

5.1. Neighbourhood Plan

With the Plan successfully 'made', the Forum's purpose now revolves around Plan implementation. The Forum will continue to focus on its core activity to inform, engage, debate and reflect public views in relation to new development in our Area with the aim of maximising benefit to the community.

The Forum will actively seek to promote, and advance compliance with, the Plan, by for example:

- making representations to relevant bodies where development proposals are inconsistent with the Plan;
- holding meetings and liaising with landowners and site promoters/developers to increase awareness, and promote application, of Plan policies in their development proposals;
- identifying where, over time, there may be a need to amend or add to existing Plan policies to reflect changes in the local environment. In this case, we will actively engage with the local community to advise on, and seek their input to, recommended changes.

In our role as a statutory consultee, we will continue to:

- provide expertise in reviewing and responding to planning applications affecting the Neighbourhood in terms of their compliance with the Plan and its policies;
- support other local organisations or representatives, eg. the two Resident Associations, Local Councillors, Council Planning Officers, on interpretation and application of Plan policies to development proposals affecting KDBH;
- provide a channel and supporting expertise to bring the community together in responding to the Solihull Council consultation on its emerging Local Plan proposals, in the context of compliance with the KDBH Plan and its vision for our Neighbourhood, thereby providing the community with an effective voice in the strategic development planning process;
- monitor and report progress on Plan implementation, in terms of both policy application and, in the longer term, achieving the vision. Track the outcomes of Council decisions to assess how effectively planning decisions are meeting the Plan.

5.2. Wider Community Role

In the furtherance of our charitable purposes to deliver community benefit, the Forum will also work in mutual support with other community-led organisations to advance wider development in the Neighbourhood, for example by:

- using the Forum's communication channels, local networks and knowledge to support wider community activities that deliver community benefit strengthen community spirit;
- raising awareness of, and providing guidance and support on, opportunities for community funding, eg. bidding for funds arising from new development through the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy;
- where appropriate, being directly involved in promoting, securing funding for and carrying out community projects.

6.0 Stakeholder Engagement

To achieve Forum purposes, in addition to developing our community presence, we will maintain and further develop relationships with a wide range of other key stakeholders, including the Local Authority, Local Councillors; schools, health, care and wellbeing providers, employers, transport commissioners and developers.

Solihull Council will continue to be an important stakeholder. With Council funds and resources being ever more stretched, the Forum provides a level of assurance to the community around planning matters, as well as knowledgeable support to the Council. The Forum is committed to holding regular meetings with Council planning officers, as appropriate, in an effort to better understand Local Plan issues and to assess how the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan is being implemented through Development Management decisions.



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In this regard, the Forum has an important role in:

- helping Planning Officers to interpret and apply Plan policies as intended;
- as appropriate, challenging the Council where application of Plan policies is not delivering Plan outcomes and the resultant community benefit;
- liaising proactively with the Council to identify and promote how development of their emerging Local Plan proposals could best reflect Plan policies and help deliver the vision for the Area;
- liaising proactively with the Council to maximise benefit to the community from available community funding relating to application of funds the Council collects from new development undertaken in the Neighbourhood.

7.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Forum believes that it has clearly demonstrated the efficacy and value of the work that it has undertaken to date, and that this application meets the relevant legislation for formal re-designation of a Neighbourhood Forum. Based on the Forum's track record, and its clarity of purpose and activities going forward, the Council and the community alike can have full confidence in approving the re-designation of the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum.

We therefore invite the Council to re-designate our Forum as the Neighbourhood Forum representing the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Area.

Jane Aykroyd
Chair, Knowle Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum
C/O Arden Academy, Station Road, Knowle, Solihull, B93 0PT
01564 773348

Attachments:

- KDBH Neighbourhood Forum CIO Constitution
- KDBH Neighbourhood Forum 'Code of Practice' Governing Document
- KDBH Neighbourhood Forum 'Activities and Benefits' Document

APPENDIX 2: SOLIHULL COUNCIL KDBH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DECISION STATEMENT

Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan



Decision Statement published pursuant to Section 38A(9) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulations 19 and 20 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

At their meeting on 11 April 2019, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Cabinet agreed to make the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan under Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough and will be used by the Local Planning Authority to help determine planning applications in the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Area.

Reasons for the decision:

The Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions and is compliant with legal and procedural requirements. Section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that a Local Planning Authority must make a Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting in the referendum have voted in favour of the plan being used to help determine planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area. The Plan was endorsed by 95.92% of those voting in the referendum held on 14 March 2019.

This Decision Statement and the made Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan can be viewed on the Council's website at:

<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Planning/appealsenforcement/planmaking/neighbourhoodplanning>

Copies can be viewed at Solihull Connect at:

Solihull Connect at The Core
Theatre Square
Solihull
B91 3RG

Between:

9.00am to 5.00pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 10.00am to 5.00pm Wednesday and 9.00am to 1.00pm Saturday.

Copies can also be viewed at Knowle library at:

Chester House
1667-1669 High Street
Knowle
Solihull
B93 0LL

Between:

10.00am to 5.00pm Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 10.00am to 6.00pm Thursday and 10.00am to 1.00pm & 1.00pm to 3.00pm Saturday.

APPENDIX 3: KDBH NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM CIO CHARITY REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE



This is to confirm that

KNOWLE DORRIDGE AND BENTLEY HEATH NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM CIO

was entered on the Register of Charities on

22 July 2020

Registered charity number:

1190521



**Rt Hon Baroness Stowell of Beeston MBE
Chair**



**Dr Helen Stephenson CBE
Chief Executive Officer**

This certificate confirms that a charity has been entered on to the Register of Charities.
You can check a charity's current registration status by visiting the Register of Charities at
www.gov.uk/charity-commission



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**