

Community Wealth Building  
Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD

Report of: Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 7 September 2023

Wards: Clerkenwell

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## Subject: Re-designation of the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum

### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1 A Neighbourhood Forum is a body that organises the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plans allow communities to create planning policies for their local areas. Before they can produce a Neighbourhood Plan, Neighbourhood Forums need to be formally designated.
- 1.2 The Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum was first designated in 2016. Neighbourhood Forums lapse after 5 years. After lapsing in 2021 the Forum progressed work on re-designation during 2022 before submitting an application that could be consulted on this year. The forum intends on submitting a Neighbourhood Plan and to facilitate this they have applied to Camden and Islington Councils to be formally re-designated.
- 1.3 The forum application relates to the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Area which was designated along with the forum application in 2016 and remains unchanged. The area covers parts of Islington and Camden.
- 1.4 The forum application was consulted from 10 May to 30 June 2023 and no objections were received, and the responses have been set out in the Consultation Statement (Appendix 3). The Council supports the re-designation of the forum.
- 1.5 If the forum renewal application is agreed by both Camden and Islington Councils, the forum will be approved and no other organisation or body may be designated as a neighbourhood forum for that neighbourhood area until that designation expires or is withdrawn. If designated, the Neighbourhood Forum can develop a draft Neighbourhood Plan, Community Right to Build Order, or Neighbourhood Development Order for the area.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To consider the summary of responses to the consultation on the application for the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum (Appendix 3).
- 2.2 To approve the re-designation of the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum pursuant to Section 61F(5) and (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

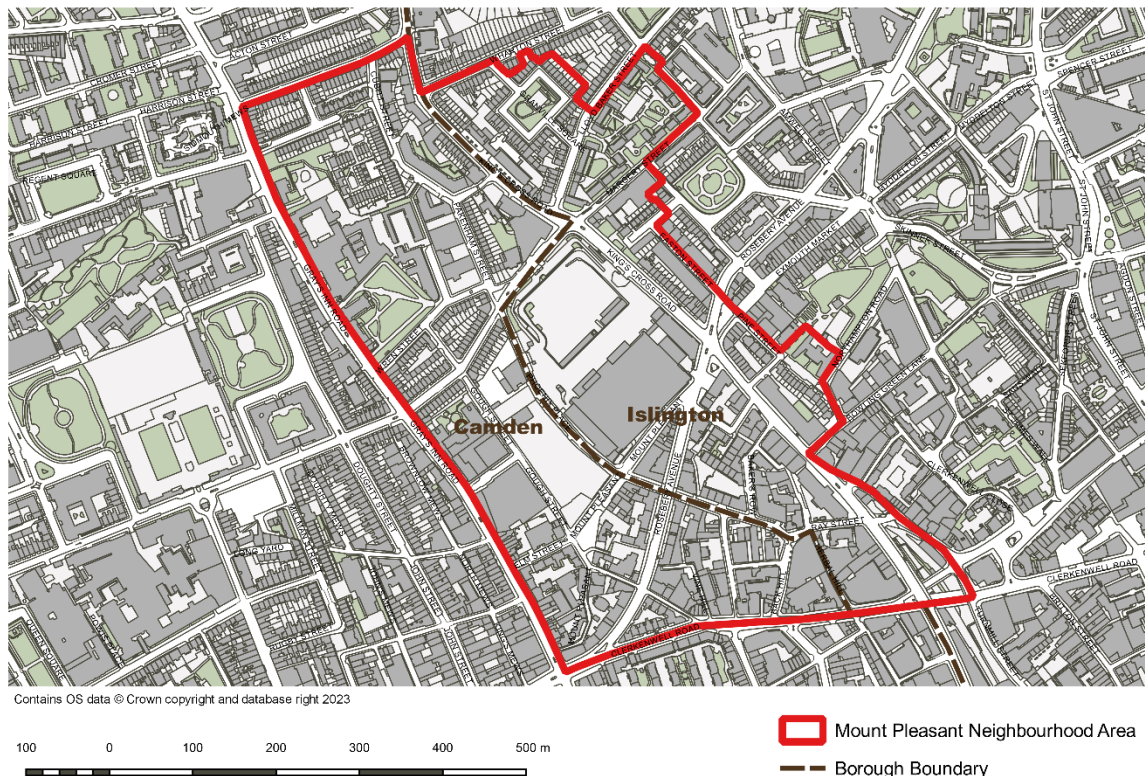
## 3. Background

- 3.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act (2011) and regulations are set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (as amended). Neighbourhood planning allows communities to influence the development and growth of their local area through the following:
  - Neighbourhood Plans set out a vision for the development of an area and contain planning policies that form part of the borough's Development Plan once adopted. Neighbourhood Plans have legal weight in planning decision making.
  - Neighbourhood Development Orders allow specified types of development to be built within an area without the need for planning permission.
  - Community Right to Build Orders allow community organisations to bring forward small-scale development without the need for planning permission.
- 3.2 Before a Neighbourhood Plan can be adopted, there needs to be a designated Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area. The Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum and Area were approved by the Islington and Camden Councils in 2016. The Neighbourhood Forum designation expired after 5 years and re-designation is now being sought.
- 3.3 The Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum has drafted a Neighbourhood Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory planning document setting out planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood and can be used in making decisions on planning applications in the area.
- 3.4 Neighbourhood Plans can also include priorities for the expenditure of Neighbourhood CIL and guidance indicates that areas with a Neighbourhood Plan should have say on spending of approximately 25% of local CIL receipts increased from 15% for areas without a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.5 The Council has commented on the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the Forum intend to make further changes and submit the plan in future. If a Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Council, approval would be subject to a separate decision in future by the Executive.

## Neighbourhood Area

The Neighbourhood Area has already been adopted and is not subject to this decision. A map of the Neighbourhood Area is provided below.

**Map 1: Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Area (adopted)**



## Neighbourhood Forum application

- 3.7 The requirements for a Neighbourhood Forum application are set out in:
- The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Part 3, regulation 8, and
  - Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 61F(5) and (7).
- 3.8 After providing feedback on several iterations of the forum application officers of Islington and Camden Councils are satisfied that the application submitted for designation of a Neighbourhood Forum meets Regulation 8 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) and Sections 61F(5) and 61F(7) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). The application therefore meets the following requirements:
- It contains a statement which explains how the organisation must be established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area.
  - It includes a written constitution.

- The membership is made up of at least 21 individuals who live or work in the area or who are local councillors and the membership is drawn from different places and different sections of the community in the area and whose purpose reflects the character of the area: The forum has 34 members, including 1 councillor from Islington and three from Camden.

- 3.9 Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) states that Neighbourhood Forum designations expire after 5 years. A Local Planning Authority can withdraw the designation if the forum is no longer meeting the conditions of its designation.
- 3.10 If the Local Planning Authority refuse the designation of a Neighbourhood Forum they must publicise their decision and reasons in a “refusal statement”.

## Consultation

- 3.11 Islington and Camden Councils carried out a joint consultation exercise on the forum applications. Under Regulations 6 and 9 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) the councils are required to publicise the applications to those who live or work in the area to which the applications relate for a minimum of 6 weeks. The consultation ran from 10 May 2023 to 30 June 2023.
- 3.12 Copies of the applications and details on how to respond were made available on the Council’s website. Copies of the application were made available at the Town Hall and notices were displayed at locations throughout the Neighbourhood Area. All contacts on the Planning Policy database were notified about the consultation.

### Consultation responses

- 3.13 Islington received six responses to the consultation. No responses objected to the re-designation of the forum. Four responses supported the re-designation and two responses provided more information for the forum when developing a Neighbourhood Plan. The responses were:
- Clerkenwell Ward Councillors (Cllr Ruth Hayes, Cllr Matt Nathan and Cllr Ben Mackmurdie) supported the re-designation of the Neighbourhood Forum.
  - Two residents supported the re-designation, which included the Chair of the Margery Street Tenants and Resident’s association.
  - A resident responded to voice disappointment with discussions at forum meetings but did not object to the re-designation.
  - Natural England responded providing links to environmental information for Neighbourhood Plan preparation.
  - The Metropolitan Police responded stating that they were supportive of neighbourhood forums generally and to advocate for Secured by Design.
- 3.14 Further detail is provided in the Consultation Statement (Appendix 3)

## Joint borough working

- 3.15 Officers from Islington and Camden have worked closely on managing the neighbourhood planning process in Mount Pleasant and will continue to do so to ensure consistency in advice and that regulations are met throughout the process.
- 3.16 Camden will be taking the decision to redesignation of the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum to the Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Community Investment on 8 September 2023 with a recommendation to approve.
- 3.17 It is recommended that the designation is only agreed subject to Camden agreeing their part of the Forum designation. Should Camden resolve not to determine the application officers would prepare a revised report to the Executive considering the implications of this and any revised recommendations.

## Next steps

- 3.18 If the Neighbourhood Forum application is approved by both Islington and Camden Councils then the designation will be publicised consistent with the regulations.
- 3.19 If designated, the Neighbourhood Forum can develop a draft Neighbourhood Plan, in consultation with residents and other stakeholders. This will need to go through a separate process before it can be adopted as required by legislation.

## 4. Implications

### Financial implications

- 4.1 The costs related to evaluating the Neighbourhood Area and Forum applications and conducting consultations have been covered using the allocated funds from Planning and Development existing staffing and revenue budgets. Furthermore, any costs associated with publicising the decision to designate a Neighbourhood Area will also be accommodated within the current budgets. It is estimated that these costs will amount to approximately £1000.

### Legal Implications

- 4.2 The consultation on the Neighbourhood Area has been conducted in line with the relevant planning regulations.
- 4.3 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) (as amended) sets a prescribed date for the determination of a forum application. In this case, the prescribed date is 20 weeks from the date immediately following that on which the application is first publicised, which is 10 May 2023.

If a decision is made to refuse to designate a neighbourhood forum the Local Planning Authority must publicise the decision and set out their reasons in a “refusal statement”, as required by Section 61F(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990).

Other legal implications are included within the body of the report.



## Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

- 4.4 There are not deemed to be any significant environmental implications from the re-designation of the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum. Impacts are only likely to arise if the Neighbourhood Forum proceeds with production of a Neighbourhood Plan for the area. A separate Environmental Impact Assessment may be required to be produced alongside a Neighbourhood Plan.

## Equalities Impact Assessment

- 4.5 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 4.6 An Equalities Impact screening exercise has been carried out. No negative impacts were identified in the screening exercise and neutral impacts were identified for all groups of people. The re-designation of the forum clears the way for the group to create a Neighbourhood Forum which could have impacts on groups by creating new planning policies or designating sites. Adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan would be subject to a separate Council decision requiring a separate Equalities Impact Screening.
- 4.7 It is important to note that neighbourhood planning activities are carried out by local communities and not the Council. Nevertheless, officers can work with local community groups and encourage them to consider resident/equality impacts at relevant stages as proposals are developed. RIAs will only inform Council decision making. However where equalities implications are identified officers will raise these and encourage community groups to consider these impacts as part the evidence for more detailed proposals – for example, as part of a wider sustainability appraisal. Regarding the forum application officers have worked closely with the Mount Pleasant Association to ensure that as far as possible the forum is open to all, including people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act (paragraph 7.1), with membership drawn from different sections of the community and from different places within the area, as required by legislation. The application demonstrates a commitment to continue to engage with the local community and be as inclusive as possible, working to identify and engage diverse members of the local community.

## 5. Conclusion and reasons for the recommendations

- An application for the re-designation of a Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum (Appendix 1) has been made to both Camden and Islington Council's. The Neighbourhood Forum application meets the statutory requirements.
- No objections have been received from consultation.

- The London Borough of Camden will be deciding on the approval of their part of the Neighbourhood Forum on 8 September 2023, with a recommendation for approval.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum application
- Appendix 2 – Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum constitution
- Appendix 3 – Consultation Statement

## **Final report clearance:**

Authorised by:

Cllr Diarmaid Ward: Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance

Date: August 2023

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