

Consultation Summary

Soho and Handsworth Neighbourhood Planning Forum

This document outlines the consultation events engaged in through the Soho and Handsworth Neighbourhood Planning Forum (hereby known as ‘the Forum’).

Where possible, the consultation events started with a short presentation about neighbourhood planning, followed by an open conversation, as well as questions. Whilst the conversations were open and flexible, they all touched on three key questions:

- Do you see a need for the Forum in the area?
- What geographic area should the Forum cover?
- Which priority matters should the Forum focus on, in addition to the Neighbourhood Plan?

After the discussion, members in attendance were invited to share their contact details and join the Forum’s mailing list and WhatsApp community. This data is held in compliance with GDPR, as was noted on sign-up forms (both online and physical).

The Pre-Steering Group

The pre-steering group was populated through individuals engaged during consultation events, who showed an interest in being more closely involved. After they showed interest, further conversations were organised to understand roles and responsibilities before finalising their commitment to the pre-steering group. All consultation events were promoted in a variety of ways, including: website, social media, community Facebook groups, community WhatsApp groups, flyers, and posters, to ensure all sections of the local community were reached.

Ward Meetings

The pre-steering group engaged with local elected representatives as part of developing the idea of the Forum. As well as meeting regularly with councillors and with MP’s offices whose wards or constituencies are located in the proposed Neighbourhood Area, as well as local authority officers, a number of ward meetings were attended by members of the pre-steering group to talk about the concept of neighbourhood planning, meet residents, answer questions and gather an engaged pre-steering group to develop the Forum.

Ward Meetings attended:

Ward	Date	Location	Attendees	Outcomes
Soho and	22/11/22	St Paul’s	24	> Build awareness of the NPF

Jewellery Quarter		Church, JQ		> Answer residents' questions > Sign prospective forum members
Handsworth	14/3/23	Handsworth Wellbeing Centre	15	> Build awareness of the NPF > Answer residents' questions > Sign prospective forum members
Soho and Jewellery Quarter	28/3/24	Lodge Road Community Centre	18	> Build awareness of the NPF > Answer residents' questions > Sign prospective forum members

Alongside attending ward meetings, all local councillors and MPs whose wards/constituencies are within the boundary have been engaged on topics such as boundary formation and key local issues, including Cllr Shergill (Holyhead), Cllr Lal and Cllr Spence (Soho and Jewellery Quarter), Cllr Zaffar (Lozells) and Cllr Quinnen (Handsworth); Khalid Mahmood MP (Perry Barr) and Shabana Mahmood MP (Ladywood). Meetings have taken place both with and without officers present to talk about neighbourhood planning, the boundary, the potential of the Forum and how representatives as well as residents can be involved in the development of the Forum itself.

Stakeholder Meetings

Alongside connecting with elected representatives and attendees of ward meetings, a number of different local stakeholders as well as the general public within the proposed Forum area have been consistently engaged over the past 18 months. The table below presents the day, detail, and outcomes of significant engagement events initiated specifically to develop the Forum. Alongside this, members of the pre-steering group of the proposed Forum have been present at a number of other community meetings led by other organisations, to engage more widely on the subject of the Forum.

In Soho and Handsworth, there is a distinctive diversity of communities with different experiences. To ensure that we reached all communities, the pre-designation steering group engaged in a range of different ways. Firstly, the group shared their existing knowledge of community groups and organisations to be connected with from their diverse experiences. Following this, we reflected on our reach and those we didn't reach. Identifying some stakeholders we did not know personally, we then reached out to the organisations to develop our relationship. Similarly, we tried to ensure we reached those with protected characteristics whom we did not reach in our initial contact. From this, promotion for events took place physically at a range of community centres, schools, nurseries, places of worship associated with a range of religious groups, cafes, restaurants and community buildings. We ensured that many of our events were both online and in-person, on a mix of weekday and weekend, to ensure that people could access the events when they were available. The events included volunteers who could speak a range of community languages like Punjabi, Urdu and Kurdish

which helped to engage with a range of stakeholders that may have struggled to engage without this support. Alongside this we worked with our stakeholders to identify particularly marginalised groups in their networks to ensure that they attended and were able to access the events we ran, such as those from LGBTQ+ backgrounds, unhoused peoples, those living in poverty, and women. The geographical spread of events below also covers the neighbourhoods in the proposed forum area evenly, ensuring that all local people could have access to an event close to them.

Between July 2023 and March 2024, the steering group had a range of other commitments which meant that work on the Forum slowed down. However, the team were very diligent and wanted to continue working towards designation, and therefore were able to pick the work back up after other responsibilities had slowed. The financial constraints of Birmingham City Council also meant that volunteers involved in other community efforts had more demand on their services as well as increased uncertainty within the supporting officers within the council itself.

Event	Date	Attendees	Profile	Detail
Birchfield Big Local - Neighbourhood Planning Consultation	22/11/22	27	> Residents > Faith groups	Met with the director of Birchfield Big Local and independently spoke with residents in the area. The organisation has been running for a number of years and has strong local connections. Director, staff, and residents felt a strong connection to the area and felt that the ward area should not be included in the proposed NPF. The director of Birchfield Big Local also explained their ongoing hyperlocal focus, wanting to be connected into the work of the NPF, and the potential for them to facilitate a NPF in their local area moving forwards.
Soho Road BID - Neighbourhood Planning Consultation	4/1/23	68	> Businesses > Faith groups	Met with the manager of the Soho Road Business Improvement District, who represent more than 250 businesses on Soho Road. Walked and spoke with a number of business owners up and down Soho Road about neighbourhood planning and

				the key priorities they would have for an organisation. Whilst discussions focused on issues like crime and business opportunities, there were further mentions of using unoccupied lots on the high street for new businesses, how to ensure that planning decisions on the road reflect business needs, and improving access to the high street. All business owners were keen that the Soho Road BID geography was included in the NPF.
Meeting with Residents Associations - Neighbourhood Planning Consultation	16/1/23	22	> Residents > Resident associations > Community organisations	Undertook a consultation event with a range of representatives from residents associations across Soho, Handsworth and Handsworth Wood neighbourhoods representing over 800 residents. This included the Matthew Boulton Neighbourhood Forum, Hinstock Road Residents Association, Perry Barr Community Housing Action Group, Endwood Court Good Neighbours Group, Handsworth Wood Residents Association, Antrobus Road Residents Action Group, Soho Road East Neighbourhood Watch. Spoke about Neighbourhood Planning as a concept - one which many in the group had never heard of - and how it can be beneficial to advance local needs. Handsworth-based residents associations were keen on involvement and subsequently joined the pre-designation steering group. Handsworth Wood was keen on being included but was

				conscientious of being in the same NPF as others as far away as Soho. There was also a case made for the inclusion of ‘The Triangle’ an area at the southern end of Handsworth Wood Ward bordering Handsworth ward. A follow-up meeting was agreed with representatives of Handsworth Wood residents association regarding the boundary and alternative solutions.
Handsworth Association of Schools - Neighbourhood Planning Consultation	17/1/23	7	> Education employees > Community organisations	Meeting with Handsworth Association of Schools, representing all schools and over 1,500 pupils in the local area. Meeting was with chair and staff talking about neighbourhood planning, NPF, and priorities for schools in the area. Team shared their insights and then reverted back to schools, and shared insights from schools who responded. A range of perspectives were heard across age ranges and socioeconomic backgrounds from staff who worked for the Schools Associations.
Faith Organisations Meeting - Neighbourhood Planning Consultation	27/1/23	12	> Faith organisations > Community organisations	Met with key leaders from Nishkam Group of Organisations, Bringing Hope CIC, St Michael’s Church, local mosques and temples. Topics discussed included neighbourhood planning, potential boundary, and involvement with the group. Follow up happened with individual congregations from Sikh, Muslim, Christian and Hindu communities, where 40 more people were in attendance at the places of worship visited.
Matthew	12/3/23	8	> Residents	Met with members of the

Boulton Neighbourhood Forum - Neighbourhood Planning Boundary Consultation			> Faith organisations	Matthew Boulton Neighbourhood Forum to talk about the potential boundary for the forum having already discussed the topic of neighbourhood planning. This was a mixed group based in and around the Soho neighbourhood. It was agreed that the Forum boundary should include the Matthew Boulton boundary as well as the broader Soho side of the ward.
St Andrew's Community Centre - Neighbourhood Planning Boundary Consultation	15/3/23	18	> Faith organisations > Residents associations > Residents	Met with a range of residents - both previously engaged and newly engaged - about the proposed neighbourhood planning forum. Conversation was about the boundary and included an interactive activity with maps and stickers, for members to highlight what they would like included in the boundary and why. This activity was undertaken by 16 people at the event. Used experience based co-design (participation methodology) as an approach whilst using a range of media, such as drawing and map-making, to talk about places of importance and neighbourhoods of most meaning. From this, we recognised the importance of Handsworth ward in the boundary to the Forum in order to ensure continuity across neighbourhoods.
Handsworth Library - Neighbourhood Planning Boundary Consultation	23/3/23	84	> Mixed	Organised alongside the previous boundary consultation, this one took place outside the library and the methodology was adapted so it could be done in a shorter time with people passing

				through the streets. We showed individuals short videos about neighbourhood planning, spoke about the forum and then asked them to mark places of importance which should be included in the boundary. We resulted in 45 places of importance placed on the map. This was a way of engaging people who would otherwise be less likely to attend a session taking place over an extended period of time. Used experience based co-design as an approach whilst using a mixed media involvement strategy to talk about places of importance and neighbourhoods of most meaning. This was also attended by local Cllr Chaman Lal.
Lodge Road Community Centre - Neighbourhood Planning Boundary Consultation	3/5/23	26	> Residents > Faith organisations	Met with a range of residents - both previously engaged and newly engaged - about the proposed neighbourhood planning forum. Conversation was about the boundary and included an interactive activity with maps and stickers, for members to highlight what they would like included in the boundary. 19 maps were completed. Used experience based co-design (participation methodology) as an approach whilst using a range of media, such as drawing and map-making, to talk about places of importance and neighbourhoods of most meaning. From this, we emphasised the importance of Hockley in the boundary of the Forum.
King Charles	7/5/23	134	> Mixed	Organised alongside the

Coronation - Neighbourhood Planning Boundary Consultation				previous boundary consultations, this one took place at a local Coronation event held by a consortium of local organisations. Same engagement method and activities as the above event. 45 maps completed and a recognition of some key areas of concern for potential Forum members, e.g. transport, traffic, HMOs and fly tipping. Signed up 56 people to the Forum and engaged with 3 interested in pre-steering group involvement.
Handsworth Wood Residents Association Follow Up - Neighbourhood Planning Boundary Consultation	12/7/23	12	> Residents > Residents associations	Met with Handsworth Wood Residents Association committee to discuss the boundary. Presented draft boundaries following existing consultations and agreed that Handsworth Wood Residents Association would like to be connected into the forum but separate in the eventuality they create their own Neighbourhood Planning Forum. This subsequently helped shape some thinking about the governance of the forum in light of interested parties who might be outside of the boundary to support knowledge sharing in the local area.
Handsworth Library - Pre-Designation Steering Group Consultation	17/3/24	16	> Mix	Having established local aspirations for a NPF and for the draft boundary, the final set of consultation events focused on presenting the work of the pre-steering group to-date and recruiting further individuals for the pre-steering group. This event included people from across the local

				community and organisations, both those who have engaged before as well as newer groups. This was an opportunity for already engaged individuals to reconnect and work together to drive forward towards designation. A key outcome of this was to engage more individuals in the pre-designation steering group by reflecting on roles and responsibilities. By the end, our steering group had increased in size and we were able to represent a broader section of our communities as well as businesses.
Online - Pre-Designation Steering Group Consultation	18/3/24	11	> Mix	This was the same format as above but took place online at a different time for individuals who couldn't make the in-person session. We were able to engage the group and brought on 2 additional steering group members.
Lodge Road Community Centre - Pre-Designation Steering Group Consultation	14/4/24	14	> Mix	This was the same format as above but took place at a different venue in an alternative part of the Forum area. From this, we were able to increase the size of our steering group to represent a better geographic spread of the area.
Online - Pre-Designation Steering Group Consultation	17/4/24	9	> Mix	This was the same format as above but took place online at a different time for individuals who couldn't make the in-person session. We were able to engage the group and brought on 1 additional steering group member.