

Chris Walker
Director of Planning
Brent Council, Brent House
349-357 High Road
Wembley
Middlesex HA9 6BZ

Please reply to:
The Unity Centre,
103 Church Road,
London,
NW10 4DE.

Dear Mr Walker

Re: Designation of The Unity (Church End and Roundwood) Neighbourhood Forum

As part of the legacy of Brent Fair Share Trust which has been operating as a community development agency with funding from Big Lottery since 2003 working in the former local authority wards Church End and Roundwood (now Dudden Hill and Harlesden Ward).

Under the Localism Act 2011 we would like to make a formal application to become designated as a Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area.

The 2011 Localism Act provides an opportunity to build on the assets and learning from Fair Share to develop a Church End and Roundwood approach to localism. Namely:

- Setting up a Neighbourhood Forum which would have a distinctive legal entity with the local community, business and political representatives (this would replace the panel post March 2013);
- Development of a Neighbourhood Plan (this would be building on priorities review process but would require technical details around building, planning developments and environmental considerations);
- The Neighbourhood Forum and plan would attract funding from DCLG and other funders e.g. Big Lottery around community engagement and commissioning/delivery of services;
- This would create the platform to buy or have assets transferred to the local community e.g. The Unity Centre;
- The forum would develop and provide the leadership and capacity skills for local people to engage with Brent Council and other local partners.

Please find attached the following documentation and information as evidence that the Unity Neighbourhood Forum complies with the validation criteria for neighbourhood forums:

- Constitution of the Neighbourhood Forum (Annex 1)
- Map of the proposed boundary for Neighbourhood Forum (Annex 2)
- Description of the proposed boundary for Neighbourhood Forum (Annex 3)
- Names and address of 53 local residents, workers/ businesses and councillors who are members of the Forum or show an interest in joining (Annex 4)
- Footprints consultation document on the plans in developing the Neighbourhood Forum and Plan (Annex 5).

To date, we have had constructive meetings with the planning department, Harlesden Town Centre Committee and Catalyst Housing. We have held a stakeholder event in October 2012 (attended by the regeneration department), a public meeting in February 2013 (attended by local councillors) and held discussions in the community with local residents, tenant representatives, young people, local businesses and Mitchell Brook School.

The proposed Neighbourhood Forum area is bound by the railway line north of Craven Park/ Craven Road junction, continuing up to the underground line and along the railway sidings to Dudden Hill Lane, Denzil Road, Brenthurst Road, Beaconsfield Road, along the edge of Willesden New Cemetery and Roundwood Park, Drayton Road, St Mary's Road and Craven Park Road. An extension in to Stonebridge Ward (based on discussions with the Planning department) is followed to the edge of Gibbons Recreation ground and follows the edge of the recreation ground to the boundary between Mandarin Court and The Harmony Centre and then follows Gresham Road on both sides until the junction with Woodheyes Road. It then follows Woodheyes Road to the A406 North Circular Road. The boundary then crosses Woodheyes Road and continues along the A406 to the canal feeder. The boundary moves south along the canal feeder until the bridge in Bridge Road where it continues in a southerly direction at the boundary of the gardens of Bridge Road east (odd numbers) until reaches the railway bridge again. up to the North Circular Road, and down the canal feeder to Bridge Road. For a full description of the boundary line see Annex 3.

Brent is ranked amongst the top 15 per cent most deprived areas of the country with some neighbourhoods falling within the five per cent most deprived as part of the Forum area (Church End, Harlesden and Stonebridge).The percentage of BAME population in Brent is now 64% where a large proportion live in the proposed Forum area. Almost ten per cent claim jobseekers allowance in the deprived neighbourhoods and there is an above average proportion of out of work benefit claimants. Around a third of children live in poverty. There is an 11 year gap in life expectancy between people living in Harlesden and those in Northwick Park. 20 per cent of households have an annual income of £15,000 or less.

We recognise that our proposed neighbourhood covers part of Stonebridge Ward particularly around Bridge Road, Gibbons Recreation Ground and Mitchell Brook School. Based on our consultation events along with meeting with local councillors, school and local residents there is strong commitment for this part of Stonebridge to be part of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum. For the following reasons:

- The North Circular Road Regeneration Area has no specific plans around developing Bridge Road. This is further reinforced by the fact that the Core Strategy has not defined the boundary of the NCR regeneration area and thus there is no reference to Mitchell Brook School or Bridge Road;
- Residents who live on "the spur" of the Bridge Road extension feel that the Council either are not aware of their needs or have forgotten that they exist. The residents identify with Church End rather than Stonebridge ward which is reflected in the foot fall of local residents' local shopping facilities and transport links on Church Road;
- Brent Fair Share has funded a number of community projects over the last nine years and worked closely with Mitchell Brook School as the majority of the pupils live within the current Fair Share catchment area.

The area is appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area because residents throughout the area tell us that they identify with the neighbourhood of Church End and Roundwood, because the area is based on clear physical features and because it includes areas already identified by Brent Council for regeneration. We recognise the Council's spatial vision for Brent, as set out in the Core Strategy, and its designation of Church End as a growth area and we wish to work with the Council to bring forward a planning document for the area. This will provide clear guidance and direction for developers as to the way local people want to see Church End and Roundwood move forward. The Neighbourhood Forum would have a key role in the delivery of the plan, being in a position to attract funding, buy or have assets transferred and form partnerships.

We have the following vision and aspirations building on the learning of Fair Share Trust Brent over the nine years to ensure that the local community can be empowered and have a leadership role in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the proposed area. Namely:

- Working creatively using methods that are bottom-up, participative and consensual to develop a neighbourhood plan;
- Providing mutual support to local residents and businesses, community and voluntary sector groups on planning and community related issues;
- Putting Church End and Roundwood back on the map by addressing poverty and the high numbers of young people without homes and jobs and bring services and projects to the area;
- Promoting the profile and image of the area as a destination point for investment, job creation and environmental improvement;
- Support employment and training initiatives which can raise the skills and knowledge of local people;
- Investment and redevelopment of Church Road and local industrial estates, to nurture existing businesses, attract new businesses and so that the quality and variety of shops serves the community well;
- Improving health and education facilities to support wellbeing and quality of life including meeting spaces and activities that are fully accessible;
- Change the environment and culture of the area so young people feel safe and valued and to achieve their fullest potential through opportunities being available;
- Priority for building homes that are genuinely affordable and to address the homelessness of young people. New and existing homes and their environments must be well maintained.
- Local streets and roads should be designed and maintained to encourage people to walk and cycle, and with better bus services.

These objectives provide a rationale for the boundary of the area. By establishing a Neighbourhood Forum, the local community will ensure that the much needed regeneration builds on the existing character of the area, promoting and enhancing existing businesses and services whilst also attracting new investment.

Over the last several weeks we have had meetings with the ward Councillors in Dudden Hill, Harlesden and Stonebridge who are supportive of our plans and vision.

We plan to have monthly meetings of the Forum. With the support of Catalyst Housing they will provide free meeting space and base at The Unity Centre as part of their commitment to developing the Forum.

We have an initial Forum meeting on the 21st March where we appointed the first Secretary. We are in the process of developing a work plan to steer the Forum to be an incorporated body over the next several months with a proposed AGM by the latest spring 2014.

The London Community Foundation will provide expertise in developing a fundraising strategy to support the future work of the Forum to develop resources for capacity building local residents and businesses in developing community projects to support the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan.

We are in the process of developing a new website, Facebook and twitter page in raising the profile of the Forum.

Currently we are using the Brent Fair Share Trust website (<http://www.fairsharebrent.org.uk/>).

The Regeneration and Consultation Team at Brent Council presented at our Forum meeting on the 25th April around the proposed planning application for Church Road. Our next meeting will be the 5th of June.

Neil Jackson former Brent Fair Share Trust Community Development Manager is the designate Secretary to the Forum and thus will be the point of contact for future correspondence in connection with our designation application. His contact address is The Unity Centre, 103 Church Road, London, NW10 4DE.

We look forward to a positive response to our application as we believe this would add value to Brent Council's planning framework.

Yours Sincerely

Neil Jackson

C.c. Patrick Vernon OBE, Brent Fair Share Trust Neighbourhood Adviser and Panel Member

Victoria Warne, Deputy Chief Executive, London Community Foundation