

WESTBOURNE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

CONSTITUTION

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1 OVERVIEW

Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum brings people together for a better community life in the Westbourne ward.

Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum is a community partnership between local residents, businesses, places of education, and voluntary organisations. The Forum is open to everyone who shares an active interest in the life of Westbourne.

The Forum will aim to influence the planning and development of the neighbourhood in line with the needs of local people and organisations. To achieve this, the Forum will ensure availability of robust information about the nature of our community and clear identification of local needs, giving voice to local people and bringing them together to act.

The Forum will set out principles and criteria to inform planning and development. To achieve this in a comprehensive way, the Forum will cooperate with local organisations to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure consistency in local endeavours and results.

The Forum will strive to be an accountable and effective partnership, deeply rooted in the local community, but also open to wider partnership in North Westminster and in the wider City.

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The Forum aims to hold at least two public events every year, and convene at least one Community Meeting, to which the Forum Committee will report and receive reactions and suggestions.

The Forum will be managed by an elected Forum Committee, which will meet regularly. Between Committee meetings, current and urgent business will be entrusted to an elected Standing Committee, whose decisions will then be submitted to the Forum Committee for validation.

The Forum Committee may establish Working Groups where they can be useful in taking forward the Forum's priorities.

Committee members and other officers will be expected to subscribe to a Code of Conduct and to declare any possible interest that could conflict with the Forum's purpose and objectives.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 Mission

Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum structures its action according to three main missions:

- Enacting development: informing and shaping the planning and development of the local area, in pursuance of continued regeneration and improvement objectives
- Promoting Welfare: promoting and enhancing health and well-being in the community
- Fostering cohesion: strengthening community identity and solidarity by overcoming cultural and language barriers.

To achieve these, the Forum privileges three lines of action:

- Advocacy: identify local needs and become the voice to relay them to the relevant agencies
- Mobilisation: foster and activate good will and initiative and boosting energies for local projects
- Delivery: take a prominent role in planning and development projects in the area, while preparing to stand as potential public service provider as and when appropriate and develop skills to deliver if accredited and selected.

To put this into practice, the Forum will endeavour:

- To create a community space, to act as a hub where needs, aspirations and energies can meet, formalise and give rise to action
- To produce a Neighbourhood Plan, to serve as a reference when engaging with planning and development issues
- To develop entrepreneurial capacity to apply for accreditation as potential public service provider
- To develop templates and implement communication strategies to optimise mobilisation of skills and energies on planning and other community projects.

2.2 Purpose and objectives

The Forum's purpose consists of "growing our own" model of neighbourhood working within Westminster, particularly in the planning area. The ground is well understood and prepared, the tools are already there, and a significant "capital" has been forged. Having built resilient partnerships and invested in renewal, the Forum is looking ahead towards deploying its capacity in more ambitious ways in areas where the community sector could play a part that is less dependent on the public sector – and the public purse.

To implement this, Westbourne Forum will endeavour:

- to raise its profile as part of the community, a product of community investment and effort, that identifies with the genuine interests of the local community: an advocate and a champion;
- to invest this enhanced profile, together with the skills and energies of local people and organisations, in taking a decisive part in local planning, in particular in designing and conducting consultation processes;
- to help strengthen local hubs at neighbourhood level, creating a focus for connecting and empowering people and organisations;
- to realise value in local assets through community investment, turning supporters into associates;
- to raise its entrepreneurial and practical profile, in order to engage with problems and opportunities, when these tend to pose more difficulties for public agencies.

2.3 Values statement

The Forum aspires to work in accordance with the following values.

Westbourne Forum is at the HEART of the community: it gathers energy from the people and channels them to the people.

- Independence: the Forum works with and for the community and is not anybody's agent.
- Trust: the Forum has no hidden agenda, political or otherwise.
- Transparency: the Forum is always open to dialogue, what people will see is what they will get.

Westbourne Forum is a VOICE of the community: it speaks from and for people here.

The Forum is rooted in a strong culture of openness and inclusiveness, thus fulfilling a vital function in enabling people to work together. People come to the Forum on an equal footing rather than being associated with one group or another. In turn, this will enable the Forum to articulate and advocate the area's needs in a way that rings true for local people.

Westbourne Forum is a MUSCLE for the community: it empowers the people to take initiatives and do things, by unlocking local capacity and enterprise.

In Westbourne, the Forum is instrumental as a local catalyst, focusing action on where it was needed and leveraging the input of those who needed to be involved.

This will enable the Forum:

- to build capacity, to empower, to activate, thanks to the quality of its relationships and in-depth local knowledge;
- to give support to those who need to feel they belong, that is, acting as a social entrepreneur;
- to provide a space where ideas and needs could turn into practical initiatives and achievements.

3 ORGANISATION

3.1 The Neighbourhood Forum

Pursuant to the Localism Act 2011, Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum will be in place for five years.

The Forum will hold at least one Community Meeting every year, at which the Forum Committee will present a formal report. Such Meetings will have to be well publicised, with a notice of not less than two weeks.

The Forum will hold at least two community events each year, preferably in cooperation with other local organisations. At these events, the Forum will ensure that its ongoing work is presented in an appropriate way and that participants to the events can obtain information on the Forum's activities and projects.

3.2 The Forum Committee

The Forum Committee is both a representative body for the community and a partnership group for planning activity in the neighbourhood. As such, it is where representatives of Westbourne community come together.

The Forum Committee is responsible for guiding and overseeing work to carry out the purpose and objectives of the Forum. This involves:

- setting out a vision reflecting the needs and priorities of the local community;
- developing the Neighbourhood Plan in a local rather than strategic perspective;
- encouraging contributions to positive planning;
- ensuring the general conformity of the neighbourhood Plan with local, regional and national guidelines and regulations;
- implementing the Neighbourhood Plan as a statutory document;
- producing neighbourhood development Orders as and when specific local development requires;
- identifying any local needs not covered by the neighbourhood Plan and possible ways of addressing those needs;
- building up the Forum's competence with respect to the Community right to build and the Community's role as a potential public service provider.

Composition of the Forum Committee

The Forum Committee will be composed of at least 15 members, and will include representatives of:

- residents in the Forum area, with the intention of reflecting the geographical structure of the Forum area;
- the business community;
- voluntary and community organisations;
- other local organisations (such as local schools);
- young people.

The ward Councillors will sit on the Forum Committee as full members.

The Forum Committee will invite representatives of service provider organisations serving the neighbourhood to take part to its meetings, either on a permanent basis, or as appropriate to the subjects discussed.

The Forum Committee will be able to co-opt members to fill vacancies arising from resignation, or from failure to attend three consecutive Board meetings without reason. Such co-opted members will have full member status from the Board meeting following their acceptance.

The Forum Committee may invite people who are able to make a significant contribution to the work of the Forum as non-voting advisors.

Elections to the Forum Committee

The Forum will endeavour to select as many of its Committee members as possible through election. The objective is at least half of the Committee members being directly elected by local people. Elections to the Forum Committee will take place within three months of the official creation of the Forum. All members of the community will be eligible to vote: residents in the Forum area, people working or studying in the Forum area, people with an active interest in the Forum area, as suitably identified.

Forum Committee members will be elected for two years, renewable throughout the lifespan of the Forum.

The Chair and Vice-Chair

At the first meeting of the Forum Committee, members present will elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair from among their number to serve for a minimum of two years.

Any full member of the Forum Committee will be eligible. However, the Forum Committee's vote will endeavour:

- to take actual or potential chairing capability as the first criterion of selection;
- to reflect the balance of the partnership within the Forum between residents and other members.

Candidates to chairing positions must submit a short written statement, to be circulated to the Forum Committee members in advance.

The Chair or Vice-Chair may be removed from office at any time by a vote taken at a two-third majority of the Forum Committee members.

Forum Committee meetings

The Forum Committee will meet at least every two months, with the possible exception of August and December. A calendar of meeting dates and venues will be produced every six months.

A Forum Committee meeting will be considered to reach its quorum in accordance with the rules set out in the Rules of Procedure (see Appendix 5).

Any member unable to attend a meeting will be expected to forward apologies in advance. Failure by a member to attend three consecutive meetings without a valid reason may lead to removal from the Forum Committee as set out in the Rules of Procedure (see Appendix 5).

The agenda of a Forum Committee meeting is the responsibility and at the discretion of the Chair. Items for consideration by the Forum Committee may be submitted to the Chair at any time. Conditions of submission and distribution of papers are set out in the Rules of Procedure (see Appendix 5).

Forum Committee meetings are open to members of the public to attend as observers, who may only speak at the discretion of the Chair. If matters reasonably deemed confidential need to be discussed, observers will be required to withdraw.

Copies of agendas or minutes and other working documents may be made available to any member of the community on request, with the exception of confidential material.

In circumstances when this is necessary, the Chair may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Forum Committee. Except in emergency, to be appreciated by the Chair, rules for submitting items and circulating documents shall be similar to those for an ordinary Forum Committee meeting.

At any meeting, the Chair will only cast a vote on a motion or resolution to resolve a tied vote.

Forum Ethics

All Forum Committee members shall subscribe to a Code of Conduct (see Appendix 4) and abide by it in all Forum matters. Failure to do so may lead to removal from the Forum Committee, in conditions set out in the Rules of Procedure (see Appendix 5).

All Forum Committee members are required to complete and sign a Declaration of Interests form. Community members shall declare at this point if they are in employment with a local service provider.

All Forum Committee members are required to declare any personal, financial or professional interest in any matter under consideration at the Forum Committee. Any member declaring an interest in an issue debated at a meeting will be required to abstain from voting on any related motion. In some circumstances, the Chair may have to ask the member to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Forum Committee members will endeavour to show the best possible level of accountability, both individually and collectively, to the local community. In particular, they must be able to explain to local people the ideas and actions that the Forum promotes and carries out, and to take due note of any suggestion, concern or complaint from local people and refer them to the Forum Committee in a diligent and appropriate way.

3.3 The Standing Committee

The Standing Committee is responsible for dealing with any Forum business that may require attention between Forum Committee meetings. It reports to the next meeting of the Forum Committee.

The Standing Committee is composed of the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Secretary as ex-officio members. Forum Committee members elect three more among their number. The Chair of the Forum Committee may propose that those three members be chosen in rotation.

All Standing Committee meetings are convened and chaired by the Chair of the Forum Committee or, in the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair. Minutes and working documents of the Standing Committee can only be made available to Forum Committee members.

3.4 The Secretariat

For its everyday operation, the Forum will rely on the services of a permanent Secretariat.

At the first meeting of the Forum Committee, members will elect a Secretary, whose responsibilities will be:

- to act as secretary at Forum Committee meetings;
- to act as secretary at Standing Committee meetings;
- to assist the Chair in preparing meetings of the Board and of the Standing Committee;
- to perform administrative tasks as necessary;
- to keep the Forum's books and archives.

The Secretary may be removed from office at any time by a vote in conditions set out in the Rules of Procedure (see Appendix 5).

3.5 Working Groups

To perform its duties in specific domains of activity, the Forum may establish Working Groups, on a proposal by the Chair and a vote by the Forum Committee at simple majority of its members.

A Working Group will operate within its remit and under the conditions set out in its Terms of Reference. It will report to the Forum Committee both regularly and on request from the Chair.

The selection of the Chair and Vice-Chair of any Working Group is the responsibility of the Forum Committee, and votes will take place at simple majority of its members.

All Working Group members shall operate in the spirit of the Forum's Values Statement. Failure to do so may lead to removal from the Group.

Membership of Working Groups is not limited to Forum Committee members, and other officers who have an expertise or interest in the focus of a Group may join its meetings. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary of the Forum Committee may attend any Working Group as members.

Observers may attend Working Group meetings subject to prior approval by the Chair of that Group. Observers may only speak with the Chair's permission.

When the Forum Committee considers that a Working Group has completed the tasks within its remit, the Chair may propose the dissolution of that Group, subject to a simple majority vote.

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Appendices

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APPENDIX 1

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The local partnership

Westbourne Forum was established in December 2004. Under the official name of Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum, it was the Local Area Renewal Partnership (LARP) for the Westbourne ward. Its central purposes were to:

- Provide a voice for the local community
- Strengthen partnership between the community and service delivery agencies
- Influence service delivery and galvanise responses to unmet needs in the neighbourhood.

As part of this role, the Forum was charged by the Westminster City Partnership with the task of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the period 2006-09. To the end, the Forum carried out extensive community consultation involving around 700 residents in 2005. Strategically the Plan formed part of Westminster City Partnership's approach to realising the "one City" vision and achieving renewal in the City's most deprived neighbourhoods.

The Plan ran until March 2009, but the Forum continued to operate along the same lines as a LARP until the spring of 2010, under the simplified name of Westbourne Forum and with an enhanced code of governance. Indeed, most priorities identified in the Neighbourhood Plan required ongoing action, as many issues would not disappear in two or three years, and some would evolve as the most urgent problems were addressed.

Over the years, the Forum has benefited from the unfailing support of Paddington Development Trust. PDT had worked with almost every part of civic life, and was therefore to share with the Forum in terms of quantity and quality of its relationship bank.

Staff and volunteers reflect the communities they serve and they are linked into local networks and community groups, maintaining good communications, including in community languages. PDT is engaged with communities that public agencies find more difficult to reach.

PDT has enabled the Forum to build up relationships with local people and organisations which have stood the test of time, while demonstrating integrity in articulating and advocating the area's needs in a rational and consensual way, that rings concrete and true.

The Forum since 2010

Since May 2010, Westbourne Forum has convened several community meetings to discuss the future, in the context of the political changes and tougher financial conditions brought about by spending cuts.

At those meetings and through many informal contacts in the area, it has become clear that people across their different cultures and backgrounds "voted with their feet" to be involved, investing time and energy in the forum as their preferred vehicle for working together. They are an expression of the Big Society in North Westminster. Through this approach, previously fragmented groups established common priorities, expressed through the agreement of local action plans.

As well as building connections across different parts of the community, PDT and the Forum have brokered more mature relationships between North Westminster and public services. Rather than courting the loudest voices, the Forum has connected with a wider, more representative range of people, giving a voice to some who hardly ever have a say and facilitating their involvement in civic life and the democratic process.

APPENDIX 2

INCLUSIVENESS AND COMMUNITY COHESION

Westbourne Forum aims to create a neighbourhood that is open and inclusive, in which all partners are equally respected and valued. The Forum wants to represent the interests of all who live, work or study in the area, as well as those who, through family or friend connections in the area, have an active interest in the life of Westbourne.

To achieve this, and with a view to fostering a high degree of community cohesion, the Forum will put in place a policy that aims to eliminate unfair discrimination from all aspects of its own work as in the wider community.

POLICY

1 The Forum Committee is committed to an integrative and inclusive neighbourhood programme, involving all social, cultural and religious groups within the community. This must be shown with particular clarity in the involvement of the Forum in every aspect of local planning.

2 The Forum Committee will not discriminate on grounds of race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, disability, HIV status, or age. As much as law provides, the Forum Committee will not discriminate against ex-offenders.

3 The Forum Committee aims to ensure the same level of opportunity and access to services to all those living and working in Westbourne. It is recognized that it may need to offer different levels of support to different groups in order to achieve this.

4 The Forum Committee will adopt a proactive attitude in eliminating unfair discrimination from all aspects of the Forum's operations, particularly in ensuring that diversity in needs and abilities is reflected in practical arrangements of meetings and events.

5 The Forum Committee is committed to ensuring equal opportunities policies from the partners that it works with.

APPENDIX 3

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1 Forum Committee members

- 1 To work to the benefit of the whole Westbourne community and refrain from pursuing personal or sectional agendas.
- 2 To act in accordance with the Forum's Equal Opportunities Policy (see Appendix 2).
- 3 To take an assiduous, active and constructive part in the deliberations and actions of the Forum Committee.
- 4 To take up opportunities for learning and development, including training and team-building activities.
- 5 To act as member of a team, in a positive and cooperative spirit.
- 6 To treat others with the level of respect they would expect to receive.
- 7 To stand by the collective decisions of the Forum Committee, helping to take them forward and supporting them in public.
- 8 To assist in regular communication of the Forum's work to the community and partner organisations.
- 9 To take responsibility as a public representative of the Forum to promote the Forum and its work.
- 10 To act at all times in line with the Forum's Values Statement.

The Forum Chair

- 1 To uphold and ensure that the Forum works in accordance with its Constitution.
- 2 To chair meetings of the Forum Committee and public meetings.
- 3 To invite contributions from the Vice-chair and Committee members to prepare for meetings of the Forum Committee.
- 4 To build unity of purpose within the Forum Committee, seeking consensus.
- 5 In case of conflict, to seek fair resolution, implementing the Forum's complaint process (see Appendix 5) when necessary.

6 To participate in the strategic development and direction of the Forum, especially regarding local planning, and to guide discussion within the Forum Committee and with partner organisations.

7 To represent the Forum and speak on its behalf in high level discussions, forums and meetings as appropriate.

8 To provide direction and guidance to the Forum Secretary.

9 To exercise discretion in taking decisions on Forum business outside of Forum Committee meetings, with the support of the Standing Committee.

10 To chair meetings of the Standing Committee.

11 To provide guidance to Chairs of Forum Working groups.

The Forum Vice-chair

1 To uphold and ensure that the Forum works in accordance with its Constitution.

2 To chair meetings of the Forum Committee and public meetings, if the Chair is absent.

3 To contribute in the preparation for meetings of the Forum Committee.

4 To work with the Chair in addressing issues concerning the Forum's work and to help maintain good working relationship.

5 To cooperate with the Forum Secretary as appropriate.

6 To chair meetings of the Standing Committee, if the Chair is absent.

Working group Chairs

1 To ensure that the Working group works within its Terms of Reference.

2 To invite contributions from group members for the preparation of meetings.

3 To chair the meetings of the Working group.

4 To identify issues, seek consensus, follow up good suggestions and guide the group towards conclusion and agreed action.

5 To decide and pursue further work outside group meetings.

6 To keep the Forum Chair informed of the progress of the group.

7 To report back to the Forum Committee on the progress of the group.

The Forum Secretary

- 1 To act as secretary at Forum Committee meetings.
- 2 To act as secretary at Standing Committee meetings.
- 3 To assist the Chair in preparing meetings of the Board and of the Standing Committee.
- 4 To provide assistance to the Forum Chair and Vice-chair as appropriate.
- 5 To provide assistance to the Chairs of Working groups as appropriate.
- 6 To perform administrative tasks as necessary.
- 7 To keep the Forum's books and archives.

APPENDIX 4

CODES OF CONDUCT

All Forum Committee members shall subscribe to a Code of Conduct as appears in this Appendix. They will be expected to abide by it in all Forum matters.

1 Members attend Forum Committee meetings and public meetings.

2 Members who cannot attend meetings give prior notice of their absence.

3 Members refrain from pursuing personal or sectional interest.

4 Members work for the benefit of the whole Westbourne community.

5 Members always act in accordance with the Forum's Equal Opportunity Policy (see Appendix 2).

6 Members take part in the Forum's work in a cooperative and constructive spirit according to their capabilities and roles.

7 Members show to other members the respect they wish to receive from them.

8 Members stand by the collective decisions of the Forum Committee and genuinely communicate and promote these decisions.

9 Members represent the Forum positively and in line with the Values Statement when dealing with the public or with other organisations.

10 Members show accountability to the community by being ready to communicate with local people as and when appropriate.

APPENDIX 5

RULES OF PROCEDURE

5.1 Working of the Forum

5.1.1 Forum Committee meetings

Quorum

To be considered to reach its quorum, a meeting of the Forum Committee will need to count at least half of the members plus one. For the needs of such calculation, the Secretary will make available to the Chair of the meeting a full list of Committee members, valid at the date the meeting was convened.

Absence

If a member has failed to attend three consecutive meetings without producing an apology or giving a valid reason, the Forum Committee may be invited to dismiss this member, providing the following rules are followed:

- The dismissal must be proposed by the Chair or the Vice-chair of the Forum Committee;
- The proposed dismissal must have been notified in the invitation to the Committee meeting;
- The member must have been contacted in writing by the Chair prior to the meeting.

The dismissal will be submitted to a vote at the majority of Committee members present, which should be no less than a third of all Committee members at the time of the meeting.

Agenda of meetings

To be considered at a meeting of the Forum Committee, items must have reached the Chair two weeks before the meeting is due to take place. Distribution of papers before or at the meeting is at the discretion of the Chair.

Items reaching the Chair less than two weeks before a meeting will be considered, at the discretion of the Chair, at that meeting if appropriate under a point of the agenda, or at the next meeting.

5.1.2 Forum Ethics

If a member has failed to comply with the Forum's Code of Conduct (see Appendix 4), the Forum Committee may be invited to dismiss this member, under the following rules:

- The dismissal must be proposed by the Chair or the Vice-chair of the Forum Committee;
- The proposed dismissal must have been notified in the invitation to the Committee meeting;
- The member must have been contacted in writing by the Chair prior to the meeting;
- The member must be given the opportunity to explain the situation to the Committee.

The dismissal will be submitted to a vote at the majority of Committee members present, which should be no less than a third of all Committee members at the time of the meeting.

5.1.3 Forum Secretary

In any situation when the Forum Secretary need to be removed from office, the Forum Committee will be invited to dismiss the Secretary, under the following rules:

- The dismissal must be proposed by the Chair or the Vice-chair of the Forum Committee;
- The proposed dismissal must have been notified in the invitation to the Committee meeting;
- The Secretary must have been contacted in writing by the Chair prior to the meeting;
- The Secretary must be given the opportunity to explain the situation to the Committee.

The dismissal will be submitted to a vote at the majority of Committee members present, which should be no less than a third of all Committee members at the time of the meeting.

5.2 Conflicts and complaints

This conflict and complaints procedure is intended to address only those problems and conflict which relate to the Forum Committee and its business. It shall be followed where there is a complaint against one or several members of the Forum Committee. This procedure must be implemented in a way that is fully consistent with the Forum's Equal Opportunities policy (see Appendix 2).

Stage 1

If an individual has a complaint against one or several members of the Forum Committee, such members have a prime responsibility to seek to resolve the problem through discussion with the person concerned. Many difficulties arise from misunderstandings and poor communication, and an open, honest and respectful discussion may suffice to resolve the problem. Failing this, the problem will be considered too serious to be resolved informally, and a formal procedure will be necessary, as detailed below.

Stage 2

If the problem has not been resolved satisfactorily at stage 1, the matter will have to be raised formally in writing with the Chair of the Forum Committee. If the Chair considers that a formal procedure is inappropriate, the complainant may be asked to pursue informal resolution under stage 1.

The Chair may seek to resolve the matter by talking directly with the relevant parties. If this is impractical or inappropriate, or if the talks fail, the Chair will convene a Panel to investigate the complaint. The Panel shall meet within four weeks of receipt of the complaint, and be composed as follows:

- the Chair of the Forum Committee;
- a resident member of the Forum Committee;
- a member of the Committee other than resident.

At his discretion, the Chair may ask the secretary to assist.

Conduct of the Panel

Once formed, the Panel will have power to make decisions in relation to the case under investigation. All parties will be expected to fully cooperate with the handling of any complaint proceedings.

The Panel shall have discretion to investigate the complaint as it sees fit, in accordance with the following requirements:

- The Panel shall first establish clearly, in writing, the questions under investigation. The Chair shall inform the parties in writing of the complaint and the questions investigated upon.
- The investigation may involve meetings with any parties connected with the complaint, at no less than 5 days' notice. Any written evidence for the Panel's consideration must be supplied in advance, to allow for its study before the meeting.

- Any individual called to such a meeting has the right to be accompanied by a supporter, who will be entitled to act as witness and to assist in the stating of the case. They may only speak on request of the person they are supporting, providing they respect the process of the Panel. Attendance of any supporter must be notified to the Chair prior to the meeting.
- Minutes shall be taken at all meetings of the Panel. If the Chair so decides, minutes will be the responsibility of the secretary.
- Based on the responses from all parties, the Panel shall ensure that there is adequate investigation of any areas where there is a conflict of evidence.
- Having conducted its investigations, the Panel shall consider its findings in relation to the questions identified at the outset. The Chair shall seek to achieve consensus on these questions. Should Panel members hold different views, the Panel shall vote. If present, the secretary will not take part in the vote.
- The Panel shall produce a written report setting out its findings, the reasons for such findings and the actions to follow from them.
- The Panel's report shall be presented in confidence for information at the subsequent Forum Committee meeting.
- The Panel's findings and decisions are final, subject to the right of appeal in conditions set out below.

Actions following the Panel's findings

The Panel shall be responsible for deciding what actions or sanctions, if any, should follow from its investigation.

Where the Panel finds that there has been misconduct by a Forum Committee member, the normal practice will be to issue the member with a written warning. In exceptional circumstances, when misconduct is judged to be serious and damaging for the Forum, the Chair will propose that the member be dismissed from the Forum Committee. Similarly, if a Forum Committee member had already been issued a written warning on a separate occasion, the Chair will propose that the member be dismissed from the Forum Committee.

Appeal

An appeal to the Panel's decision may be lodged under the following circumstances:

- a) if significant new evidence bearing on the complaint comes to light, particularly any mitigating circumstance likely to affect the severity of the misconduct investigated;
- b) if either party brings evidence that the complaints procedure was not followed correctly.

Reasons for an appeal should be put in writing to the Chair of the Forum Committee. Decision to proceed further with the appeal or otherwise will be made by the Forum Committee at its subsequent meeting.

If the appeal is to proceed, another Panel shall be formed in the following way:

- the Chair of the Forum Committee;
- another resident member of the Forum Committee than the one in the original panel;
- a councillor member of the Forum Committee, who did not sit on the original panel.

The appeal Panel shall operate under the same requirements as the original Panel. In its decisions, any sanctions imposed will be reviewed but cannot be increased.
