APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE THE PROPOSED
‘VICTORIA NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM’
AS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM FOR VICTORIA

Application from: Victoria Neighbourhood Forum

Contact details: Forum Interim Secretariat, Chris Tsikolis (Victoria BID):
info@yourvictoria.co.uk

Area: Victoria (area as designated by Westminster City Council)
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1. This application comes from a broad range of individuals, groups, businesses, organisations, interest groups, and elected members from across Victoria.

2. We remain fully open and want to actively encourage all those eligible to join the Forum to do so as soon as possible.

3. Those eligible are individuals who live and/or work in Victoria or who are elected Council Members of the three wards representing Victoria (St. James’s Ward, Vincent Square Ward, Warwick Ward).

4. We are fully committed to the highest levels of transparency where no one voice dominates and all who have a desire to participate in the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan are free and able to do so.

5. Victoria lies within the City of Westminster and is not governed by a parish council.

6. At the time of submission, the proposed Victoria Neighbourhood Forum has 54 members (members’ list attached) and we are actively seeking more by encouraging existing members to use their networks and databases, driving potential members to our website: www.yourvictoria.co.uk (pursuant to the Localism Act 2011 Schedule 9, 61F (5)).

7. The website and the associated email address are the primary means of communication for the Forum. The website hosts Forum meeting agendas and minutes, our Constitution, and details on how to join the Forum as well as details of our next scheduled meetings. As we start to draft our Neighbourhood Plan, it will also include information about the particular topics under discussion.

8. Victoria Neighbourhood Forum has been established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of Victoria. The Forum is fully committed to producing a neighbourhood plan.

9. As a diverse group of individuals, with various interests in the neighbourhood, we do not expect this process to always be smooth. Victoria benefits from a long history of association with many residential and business groups across the area, sometimes with conflicting views both between and within groups.

10. As members of the Forum, we are committed to listening and learning from each other. We accept that each of our own views is not more important than anyone else’s and that no one voice should be allowed to drown out other voices.
11. The Forum is not intended to subvert or undermine existing groups or associations and their activity. The Forum will work in partnership with existing organisations, respecting differences where they occur.

12. The Forum is designed to act as an umbrella group enabling all eligible individuals and businesses to contribute towards neighbourhood planning in Victoria.

13. We have significant expertise, knowledge and enthusiasm about our community and this is why we want to produce a neighbourhood plan that the whole community, in all its diversity, can be proud of.

14. Alongside producing a neighbourhood plan, we will work across our networks to strengthen community and improve Victoria. The Forum will also seek, where appropriate, to influence the planning and development within Victoria in line with the needs of local people and local businesses.

15. The Forum strives to be strongly connected to the local community; of it and accountable to it.

16. The Forum will work with Westminster City Council to analyse robust information about the nature of our broad community and its particular needs.

17. The neighbourhood plan we will produce will address issues of importance to all our members from across Victoria.

18. The Forum seeks to foster constructive approaches, not to stifle and prevent appropriate development. We are seeking to be plan-makers.

19. The neighbourhood plan will be in general conformity with strategic planning policy as contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, The London Plan and Westminster City Council’s Core Strategy.

20. We have developed a written Constitution (attached) which has been agreed by our members and every member of the Forum has signed a membership form.

21. Emerging priorities for the Forum are diverse and reflect the concerns of our membership. They include but are not limited to: the night-time economy and licensing issues, parking and traffic, anti-social behaviour, air quality and pollution, construction-related issues, further enhancements of existing Conservation Areas, basement conversions, broadband speed, the location, form and scale of new buildings and, finally, retail and the retail mix.

22. We have developed a growing database of contacts and we interact via a dedicated email address and through the website and public meetings. The Constitution allows for the creation of a Steering Group and, if designated, we will move to hold elections swiftly so work can begin.
23. The Forum is already relying on support (pro-bono and otherwise) from individuals and groups within Victoria. However, we will now seek to explore funding opportunities so the work of the Forum can be carried out and shared to expedite the production of a neighbourhood plan.

24. We all associate strongly with being part of the fabric of Victoria. This is the bond which joins us together. The Forum gives us a formal place for our discussions and a collective voice in plan making.

25. We invite Westminster City Council to swiftly designate our proposed Forum, as outlined herein, the representative forum for Victoria.

Victoria Neighbourhood Forum Constitution is attached to this application.

A list of names of Members of the Forum is attached to this application.
Interpretation

In this Constitution the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

**The 1990 Act**

**The 2004 Act**

**The Acts**
The 1990 Act and the 2004 Act.

**Business**
Entity or concern carrying on within Victoria some business, trade, profession, religious observance or community service, whether for profit or not, and whether incorporated or not.

**Business Member**
An individual who works within Victoria for a Business and who is included on the List of Members.

**WCC**
Westminster City Council, being the London Borough and local planning authority for Victoria Neighbourhood Area.

**Forum**
The Neighbourhood Forum established pursuant to this Constitution and named by Article 1 above.

**General Meeting**
A meeting of Members in accordance with Articles 25 to 35.

**Member**
A Business Member or a Residential Member or Elected member of WCC.

**Neighbouring Forum**
A Neighbourhood Forum designated by WCC pursuant to section 61F (5) of the 1990 Act which neighbours (whether or not it is contiguous to) Victoria.

**Resident**
An individual who lives all (or part) of the time at a dwelling in Victoria.

**Residential Member**
A Resident over the age of 18, who is included on the List of Members.

**Elected Member**
An Elected Member of the Westminster City Council.

**Steering Meeting**
A meeting of the Steering Group in accordance with Articles 47 and 50.

**Victoria**
The Neighbourhood Area (that area not being governed by a Parish Council) designated (pursuant to section 61G (1) of the 1990 Act) in and depicted on the map within the Neighbourhood Area Designation Notice, a copy of which is attached hereto.
1. By this Constitution there shall be established an unincorporated association to be known as ‘Victoria Neighbourhood Forum’.

Purpose of the Forum

2. The Forum shall have the purposes of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Victoria, its Residents and its Businesses and shall address itself to issues of local concern, including (but not limited to) the preservation and improvement of Victoria (including its environment, appearance, safety, security and amenities) and high standards of town planning and architecture.

3. The Forum shall seek to obtain and maintain designation by Westminster City Council (WCC), pursuant to section 61F (5) of the 1990 Act, as the Neighbourhood Forum for Victoria.

4. Following upon such designation, the Forum may undertake any activity permitted of a designated Neighbourhood Forum under the Acts and, specifically, shall consider (and from time to time further consider) whether to initiate any process for the making or amendment of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

5. In any event, the Forum may at any time do any lawful thing in pursuit of the purposes set out at Article 2 above, including (but not limited to):
   a. making representations as to any planning or licensing issue, whether or not consultation of the Forum is required pursuant to any statutory scheme;
   b. consulting with WCC (by WCC’s Elected Members and/or Officers), other governmental, policing or public bodies and other stakeholders interested in, affecting or affected by any actual, likely or proposed state of affairs within Victoria;
   c. seeking such changes to WCC or other governmental or public body policies or practices as may be appropriate;
   d. promoting such changes to primary or secondary legislation as may be appropriate; and
   e. holding open discussions with other groups and bodies relevant to Victoria on issues of concern to or impact upon Victoria.

6. The Forum shall be at all times a non-political organisation which shall act so far as practicable to benefit of both Residents and Businesses.
Conduct of the Forum

7. Where any issue arises within Victoria which has the potential to impact upon some location outside Victoria, the Forum (i) shall consult with each Neighbouring Forum for that location, if there is one or more, and (ii) may consult with any residents’ group, business group or other group speaking for the interests of some or all of those who live and/or work in and around the location in question.

8. If the Forum acts without first consulting as required by Article 7(i), the Forum shall so inform each Neighbouring Forum in question and shall, in any communication on the issue to any third party, make plain that the stance taken by the Forum is taken in the absence of such consultation by reason of the urgency.

9. Where any issue arises outside Victoria which has the potential to impact upon some location within Victoria, the Forum (i) if consulted by a Neighbouring Forum for that location, shall co-operate in giving full and prompt feedback to that Neighbouring Forum, and (ii) if otherwise consulted, may give such feedback as the Forum considers fit.

10. The Forum may establish such funding arrangements from both public and private sectors to enable the Forum to deliver its purpose with regard to neighbourhood planning and otherwise.

11. Cheques and other financial transactions of the Forum shall require two signatories.

12. All correspondence within the Forum shall be primarily by email to info@yourvictoria.co.uk

Membership of the Forum

13. Any Resident may become a Residential Member upon completion of an Application Form:
   a. stating the Resident’s name;
   b. identifying the dwelling which qualifies that individual as a Resident;
   c. specifying an email address for contact.

14. Any individual who works within Victoria may become a Business Member upon completion of an Application Form:
   a. stating the individual’s name;
b. identifying the name of the Business for which the individual works and identifying the Business’ place of business within Victoria where the individual works (or else explaining in what other way the Business operates within and the individual works within Victoria); 

c. specifying an email address for contact.

15. Any individual who is an elected member of the Westminster City Council may become an Elected Member on completion of an application form.

16. Any individual who both lives and works in Victoria must choose to be either a Residential Member or a Business Member when completing their Application Form.

17. Members shall keep the Secretary informed of any changes to any details supplied pursuant to Articles 13a to 16 above.

18. A Member may resign at any time by written notice to the Secretary and shall resign if unable to continue to support the purposes of the Forum set out at Article 2 above or no longer eligible to be a Residential Member or a Business Member.

19. A List of Members shall be maintained to include the details supplied in Application Forms pursuant to Articles 13 and 17 above and the date upon which the Application Form was received.

20. Any Member who resigns or dies shall be removed from the List of Members.

21. The Secretary may from time to time require all Members, some sector of Members or some particular Member to confirm and/or prove the information required at Articles 13a to c or 14a to c above.

22. The Secretary may remove any Member whose email address supplied pursuant to Article 13c or 14c is not functioning, but, if contacted by the former Member, shall restore that individual to the List of Members (with effect from the original date of joining) upon receipt of a further Application Form containing updated details, including a functioning email address.

23. Without prejudice to the entitlement of all who qualify to become Members, the Forum (both the Steering Group and Members generally) shall encourage individuals eligible to become Members to join so as:

   a. at all times to have at least 21 Members;

   b. to seek to maintain a membership representative of the whole community, balanced appropriately between Residents and Businesses;
c. within the Residential Members, to seek to maintain a balance between Residents of different locations of dwelling and types of dwelling and including at all times at least one elected member of WCC if anyone is willing to be a Member;

d. within the Business Members, to seek to maintain a balance between the various types and sizes of commercial concerns;

e. to also include a representative sample of such non-commercial concerns, in particular community institutions, as have workers/members willing to be Members; and

f. thereby, to provide good community intelligence to inform the pursuit of its purposes and justify the pursuit of its purpose under Articles 2 to 6 above.

24. In the event that (i) the Forum is duly designated in accordance with Article 3 above and (ii) the number of Members shall at any time fall below 21, the Forum shall suspend its activity pursuant to Article 4 above unless and until the number of Members again rises to or above 21.

25. Members may not do any public act on behalf of the Forum or make any public representation in the name of the Forum save to the extent which may be permitted by the Steering Group or endorsed by a General Meeting.

Neighbourhood Forum General Meetings

26. The Forum shall hold General Meetings at intervals no greater than half yearly, in each case in a location within Victoria. The actual timing of the General Meetings will be the responsibility of the Steering Group.

27. At least 21 days’ email notification must be given to Members of the agenda with the date and time of the holding of a General Meeting. While the envisaged location of the General Meeting should be notified also when first notifying the time and date, that location may be confirmed or changed by email not less than two weekdays in advance of the General Meeting to accommodate any unavailability, unsuitability or other difficulty with the original envisaged location.

28. At least fifteen members must be present at the start of the General Meeting for it to be declared quorate.

29. All Members shall be entitled to attend General Meetings, to stand for the Steering Committee and to propose and vote for motions.
30. Individuals who are not Members, unless excluded for good reason by whoever is chairing the meeting, shall be welcome to attend General Meetings of the Forum, in a personal and/or representative capacity, but Individuals who are not Members (i) shall not vote on any issue and (ii) shall not be permitted to address that General Meeting unless specifically authorised by whoever is chairing it.

31. Upon any vote each Business registered in the Area shall have one vote, regardless of the number of Business Members who work for that Business. If the Business Members working for that Business present at the General Meeting are not able between themselves to determine which individual amongst them should wield that vote for the Business, the Secretary shall take the vote from one whose name was earliest to be inscribed on the List of Members (and, if more than one was inscribed at once at the earliest date, from the one of them earliest in alphabetical order of family name).

32. Upon any vote, each Residential Member shall have one vote. A Residential Member who is also a Business Member shall have one vote but, if it is cast as a Residential Member, any other individual present as a Business Member for the same Business may also cast a vote as a Business Member for that Business.

33. Members must register and declare any conflict of interest (affecting the Member, the Member’s family and/or the Business for which the Member works to a marked degree beyond that which is natural and inevitable in persons sufficiently interested in Victoria to be eligible to become Members) before contributing, including voting, on any issue.

34. All votes shall count equally in a single ballot. Abstentions shall not count as a ‘no’ vote but shall be ignored for the purposes of the vote and determining a majority of those who voted, although the presence of abstainers at the meeting does count towards making up a quorum. Postal votes do not count. Telephone votes do not count. Proxies cannot be given and members must be present in person.

35. The Forum and the Steering Group may establish working ‘sub-groups’ to address a particular issue in accordance with such detailed personnel (who may be, but need not be, Members) and remit as is considered appropriate.

36. The Forum Members may:
   a. receive and comment on the report from the Steering Group;
   b. discuss and debate any issue to which the purposes of the Forum at Articles 2 to 6 above relate;
   c. approve the annual report and accounts, where relevant;
d. adopt constitutional amendments in accordance with Article 54.

Composition of the Steering Group

37. The Forum shall have a Steering Group which shall manage the Forum.

38. The Steering Group shall be comprised of 12 Members all of whom shall volunteer themselves for election.

39. At any one time the Steering Group shall include at least five Residential Members and at least five Business Members.

40. At the first General Meeting a completely fresh Steering Group shall be elected (which may but need not comprise some or all of those Members previous acting as the Steering Group). Thereafter, on a rotating basis, at least two Residential Members and two Business Members must stand down on the anniversary of the first General Meeting, and then they may offer themselves for re-election.

41. All Members shall be entitled to stand when elections are held to the Steering Group provided that they could be elected without contravention of Article 39 above. Voting shall take place only if a quorum is present and shall be by a show of hands in the first instance. When electing Members to the Steering Group, Members shall bear in mind that the Steering Group must be representative of a cross-section of the differing interests within Victoria. The individual(s) receiving the highest proportion of votes shall be elected to the vacancy (vacancies) on the Steering Group, provided that the individual in question, after taking into account those already on the Steering Group and any more successful candidate(s) remains eligible to serve on the Steering Group in accordance with the requirements of Article 39.

42. The Steering Group shall select its own officers, including a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary to serve terms of up to two years (save that in the case of officers selected prior to the first General Meeting, they shall serve until the end of that General Meeting whereupon, if elected to the Steering Group, they shall be eligible for selection for up to a further two years’ service).

43. If the position of Chair is held by a Residential Member, the position of Vice Chair must be held by a Business Member. Likewise, if the position of Chair is held by a Business Member, the position of Vice Chair must be held by a Residential Member.

44. After the first General Meeting, the Chair upon completing the term to be served (or resigning as Chair) shall step down from the Steering Group, but
that individual may be re-elected to the Steering Group at any election held at the second (or subsequent) General Meeting following the stepping down. Upon the Chair stepping down, the Steering Group shall select a new Chair (who may be someone still serving a term as an officer) and may select new officers for any other vacant office or for any office vacated in consequences of such selections.

Steering Meetings and Steering Group Operation

45. The Steering Group shall hold Steering Meetings as often as is necessary to pursue the purposes of the Forum as set out at Articles 2 to 6 above, but not less than quarterly.

46. If any vacancy occurs, the Steering Group may co-opt a Member(s) into its number (subject to the requirement of Article 39) who may stand for election at the next General Meeting.

47. The Steering Group may delegate responsibilities on specific matters to such persons as it considers appropriate, including administrative support from a third party.

48. All Steering Group decisions must be agreed on a simple majority by a quorum of no fewer than three Business Members and three Residential Members from the Steering Group present in person, or in communication via conference facility (telephone, internet or otherwise). The votes within the Steering Group shall be taken within a single ballot regardless of whether the voter is a Residential Member or a Business Member.

49. The Chair of the Steering Group shall:
   a. Chair General Meetings and call and chair Steering Meetings.
   b. Have a casting vote in the event of a tie in any vote at any General Meeting or Steering Meeting.
   c. Act on behalf of the Forum and represent it externally.
   d. Interpret this Constitution; interpretation shall only be overturned by six or more of the rest of the Steering Group Members in which case the disagreement shall be referred to the General Meeting.
   e. Act as joint signatory on the Forum’s bank account alongside the Treasurer.
50. The Vice Chair shall:

a. Chair General Meetings and call and chair Steering Meetings if the Chair is absent.

b. Have a casting vote in the event of a tie in any vote at any General Meeting or Steering Meeting if the Chair is absent.

c. Act alongside the Chair on behalf of the Forum and represent it externally when the Chair is unavailable.

d. Assume the Chair’s responsibilities if the Chair resigns until such time as a new Chair can be appointed.

e. Assist the Chair with interpreting the Constitution.

f. Take minutes at a General Meeting or a Steering Group meeting if the Secretary is absent.

g. Act as joint signatory on the Forum’s bank account alongside the Treasurer.

51. The Secretary shall:

a. Organise, take and circulate minutes of General Meetings; organise (upon and subject to the Chair or Vice Chair’s call), take and circulate minutes of Steering Group meetings;

b. Maintain and make available for inspection by Members a copy of this Constitution updated to incorporate such amendments as may be duly made to it;

c. Ensure the Forum website is maintained and updated regularly to contain all key documents including the minutes of all Steering Group and General meetings;

d. Maintain and make available for inspection by Members an up to date List of Members, recording the details required of Members pursuant to Articles 13 and 21 above and noting the date upon which their Application Form was received (or is deemed received pursuant to Article 22 above);

e. Chair General Meetings and Steering Meetings if the Chair and Vice Chair are absent (in which eventuality the taking of minutes may be delegated by the Secretary to Treasurer and, if the Treasurer is absent, to another Member);
f. Have a casting vote in the event of a tie in any vote at any General Meeting or Steering Meeting if the Chair and Vice Chair are absent;

g. Act as joint signatory on the Forum’s bank account alongside the Treasurer.

52. The Treasurer shall:

a. Be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the Forum.

b. Be responsible for presenting an annual budget for the following year to the Forum.

c. Submit a summary of the accounts at every Steering Meeting unless the Steering Meeting resolves not to require it of him on that occasion.

d. Take minutes at a General Meeting or Steering Minute if the Secretary is acting as chair (and has asked the Treasurer to take minutes) or is absent;

e. Chair General Meetings and Steering Meetings if the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary are absent (in which eventuality the taking of minutes may be delegated by the Treasurer to another Member);

f. Have a casting vote in the event of a tie in any vote at any General Meeting or Steering Meeting if the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary are absent;

53. No constitutional amendments shall take effect unless and until the decision of a simple majority at a Steering Meeting is ratified by a two thirds majority at a General Meeting preceding which not less than 21 days’ email notice of the proposed amendment has been given to Members. Articles 2, 6 to 9, 39, 48 and 57 shall not be amended unless there is unanimity amongst those voting and, in the case of articles 7 to 9, full and proper prior consultation with each Neighbouring Forum which may be affected by any change.
Dissolution

54. In the event of the dissolution of the Forum, any net assets/monies shall go to local community based organisations, as agreed by the majority of the Forum.

55. In construing this constitution the principles of interpretation set out in the Interpretation Act 1978 shall be applied as if this constitution were legislation to which that Act applied.

56. References to legislation in this constitution shall be construed to refer and include such amended, augmented or replacement legislation as in future takes the place of the legislation here cited.