

Estate Renewal Forum [INSERT NAME] Estate Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct

Purpose of the Estate Renewal Forum

Estate renewal forums are an important part of how Milton Keynes Council will engage with residents affected by the Community-Led Estate Regeneration and Renewal programme. Each estate forum will be different depending on the estate; however, there are common factors that apply to all which are set out below. The specific details for the estate in the above title are set out on Page 9.

Objectives of the Estate Renewal Forum

Milton Keynes Council will give information to the estate forum to enable them to fully understand the background to regeneration and estate renewal options, enabling the forum to:

- Decide which priorities (usually up to three) the estate needs to address, in line with the themes set out within the Community Led Regeneration and Estate Renewal Strategy (housing, communities, environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing, community safety, better jobs and skills) having consulted with the community and Milton Keynes Council to make an informed decision on the most important areas of focus. Other priorities can be addressed once the initial objectives have been achieved.
- Develop sub-groups to lead these themed programmes of work, with all interests represented, and invite other residents and community members to participate in such sub-groups, as agreed with forum members. Sub-groups will require their own terms of reference to be agreed by the forum, will have a Chair which must not be the Chair of the forum and are likely to be smaller in number than the forum.
- Monitor the progress of the development and implementation of action plans from the sub-groups and presenting/feeding this back to the community.
- Provide information about which measures should be used as the baseline indicators to measure change on the estate over an agreed period of time e.g. social, environmental, health, crime, housing.
- Make proposals about the methods to be used for collecting information and data for the baseline; this could be qualitative or quantitative.
- Make proposals about the methods for gathering and recording data and information to measure the change over time in a way that is easy to understand by all the community.
- Empower residents and community members to have their say at every step of the process.
- Act as a sounding board for Council Officers and Council Members so they can understand issues from a resident and community perspective.
- Provide feedback, and where possible documented feedback, from a resident perspective regarding the Council's proposals and engagement activities.

- Question the Council on its proposals, analysing all relevant documents and testing whether courses of action have been explored, providing new ideas, alternatives, plans and projects that could be considered.
- Advise on how best to engage with residents and resident groups, and other community stakeholders, and encourage involvement from those who would not usually get involved.
- Ensure that the needs and rights of different groups of residents on the estate (council tenants, private tenants, leaseholders and homeowners) and more vulnerable residents, are considered.
- Highlight issues and sensitivities arising from a resident's perspective.
- Highlight issues and sensitivities arising from the perspective of other community stakeholders such as local businesses, schools and health providers.
- Help to identify how residents and community members can influence processes and proposals.
- Plan and review the work programme, including those of the subgroups.

Forums should provide a positive environment which encourages attendance and participation at meetings and promotes discussion by all its members. This does not preclude members from disagreeing on issues, but it does require that discussions (particularly controversial ones) be conducted in a manner so that members feel comfortable presenting a different view to the group.

Accountability

The forums are not decision-making bodies within the Council structure. Nevertheless, they are the main avenue for resident and community engagement and will make recommendations for renewal activity on their estate.

While individual members of the forums may not always agree with formal Council decisions to regenerate or renew an estate, the role of the forum is to consider how those decisions have been reached and how they will be executed in the best interests of current and future residents and community members.

The forums will be accountable to Milton Keynes Council; any concerns about the forum can be taken up with the Council via the Community Engagement Officer to be addressed as appropriate.

Appendix 1

Membership and roles

1. Membership of the forum will vary for different estates. However, the following principles should apply to the membership of all forums:

- The majority of members should be residents of the estate.
- Membership should be representative of the different groups living on an estate (council tenants, private tenants, resident leaseholders and homeowners) and, where applicable, any other major group of residents.
- The forum should be representative in proportion to the different tenure groups on the estate; where a specific number of representatives of certain tenures has been agreed, any vacant positions must be filled by a resident from that tenure, ensuring that all resident interests are considered.
- Membership should also be representative of key community stakeholders for an estate; this could be local businesses, a school, nursery, children's centre or a GP surgery.
- A representative from the local parish or town council will be a member of the forum.
- The ward councillor will be a member of the forum.
- A representative from the estate-based resident's association will be a member of the forum.
- The forum will also be attended by relevant Council officers, including officers from the Housing and Regeneration team and a Community Engagement Officer.
- The Chair and a Deputy Chair will be elected by the forum by secret ballot, conducted by a Council officer on an annual basis. Any forum member can stand as Chair or Deputy Chair, so long as they have a recognisable interest in the local area.
- Other attendees may be invited to participate in forums, including consultants working for the Council, other local stakeholders and external advisors, in order to ensure meetings are productive and forum members have the information and advice they need to operate effectively. Invitations for other attendees should be agreed with the forum members.
- Forum members may nominate a stand-in for themselves, on the following conditions:
 - They notify the Chair and/or the Community Engagement Officer at least a week in advance of a meeting;
 - They notify their stand-in of this Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct; and,
 - Any breach of the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct by the stand-in will reflect on themselves.
- The forum will usually be limited to 11 core members, plus the chairs of any sub-groups, Council officers and elected members, and invited guests.

2. Roles and responsibilities of the Chair and forum members

2.1 The role and responsibilities of the Chair/Deputy Chair are as follows:

- To act in an open and impartial manner, ensuring that the principles of the Code of Conduct (Appendix 2) are always met.
- To ensure the Council organises the meeting for the day and time chosen by the forum at the previous meeting.
- To be involved in the preparation of the agenda for the next meeting.
- To approve the minutes of each meeting prior to circulation/publication.
- To conduct the business of the meeting in a fair, open and transparent manner and to encourage a forum that allows members to speak without criticism or judgement.
- To ensure that members of the forum keep to an agenda and only consider new items if they are deemed to be urgent.
- Wherever possible, to ensure that each discussion has an endpoint, whether it be a resolution, a commitment to undertake or a deferral to a subsequent meeting; or other.
- To ensure the meeting runs to time and to provide a reasonable amount of time for the discussion of items identified on the agenda.
- To extend the meeting time if important subjects are still being considered or have not yet been discussed, subject to representation from different interests being available.
- To allow speakers to make their presentation and address questions or matters arising in full, without interjection from the floor, unless otherwise sought by the speaker.
- To ensure all actions and resolutions agreed during the meeting are fulfilled inside any given period (where this hasn't been possible, formal notification and reasons must be given for any delay).
- To ensure all documents requested are provided to the forum in the agreed timeframe.
- To represent the forum on other bodies as agreed by the forum.

If the Chair fails to attend three forum meetings in a row, this will result in an election of a new Chair.

2.2 The role and responsibilities of forum members are as follows:

- To attend the forums and associated meetings as agreed by the forum (or to nominate another to attend - see nomination criteria above)
- To represent the forum on other bodies as agreed by the forum.
- To act impartially and objectively, recognising that those who they represent will not all be in the same circumstances and may not be of the same opinion.
- To feedback to other residents and community members, presenting factual and accurate information.

Failure to attend three forums in a row may result in membership being withdrawn and invitations for a replacement member to be requested.

3. Organisation and administration of meetings

The organisation and administration of the meetings will be carried out by Milton Keynes Council. The Council will:

Before the meeting:

- Make sure the meeting has a clear purpose/aim.
- Organise the meeting on the day and time the forum has agreed and liaise with the Chair to prepare the agenda, minutes and any other papers.
- Give suitable period of notice and publication of the agenda.
- Arrange a comfortable, accessible venue or virtual meeting.
- Try not to change the date but advise everyone as early as possible if a change is necessary.
- To arrange for basic refreshments, if required.

At the meeting:

- Help the Chair to facilitate the meeting effectively.
- Remind and advise attendees of ground rules and the code of conduct if necessary.
- Record notes and actions (not a verbatim record) of the meeting, ensuring that the following are recorded:
 - relevant key discussion points;
 - any key differences of opinion;
 - important questions and answers;
 - votes on general issues (whether by show of hands or closed ballot);
 - agreed actions;
 - agreed recommendations.
- Review action points from the previous meeting and record the output/outcome (maintaining an action log would be beneficial).
- Provide documents requested by the forum within a 14-day timeframe wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the Council and/or document owner should explain why.
- Ensure a date and time is agreed for the next meeting that will enable as many forum members to attend as possible.

After the meeting:

- Circulate draft notes within 5 working days to forum members and relevant invited guests for approval; once 'virtually' approved, notes and actions to be published as draft on the relevant Council webpage within 5 working days of approval.
- Review any recommendations and respond as necessary.

- Consider items to be discussed at future meetings and liaise with the Chair to agree the next agenda.

In addition to the organisation and administration of forum meetings (and those of the sub-groups) the Council will develop and maintain a forum webpage on the MKC website and support the forum's activities including any required administration by sending invites, notes of meetings, newsletters etc.

4. Meetings and attendance

- Forums will be held at least quarterly (more frequently as the forum is being established) and usually for a maximum of two hours.
- The meeting of the forum will be open to all interested residents and community members who are welcome to attend as a member of the public, unless information is being presented that is commercially sensitive.
- Members of the public are encouraged to submit any questions in advance, by giving prior notice to the Chair and/or Community Engagement Officer up to 24 hours prior to the meeting. This will allow for questions to be answered as fully as possible.
- There will also be a short standing agenda item for questions and comments from members of the public in attendance.
- Quorum will be two thirds of the forum membership. Without this number present, the business of the group cannot be conducted.

There may be occasions when follow up meetings are required outside of the scheduled forum meetings. An example might be if some of the forum members wish to learn more about data and they meet with the relevant professional to discuss further. In these cases, the meetings will not be open meetings; they will however be reported on either verbally or in writing at the next forum meeting for full transparency.

5. Training and development for forum members

Milton Keynes Council will work with and support the forum to identify any skills that forum members would like to develop to enable them to take on their role as effectively as possible. Solutions could include formal training, mentoring, shadowing or on-going support to build capacity. Where any costs are involved, the Council will provide the funding.

Appendix 2

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct details the standards expected of all forum members as follows:

Members will:

- Make efforts to attend forum meetings as regularly as possible;
- Act in a courteous manner, maintain a balance of mutual respect and act in a way that is fair and unbiased;
- Be clear and honest about whether they are giving a personal view or the views of the wider group or organisation that they represent;
- Ensure that other members can take part without interruption or intimidation and treat all other members equally;
- Adhere to Milton Keynes Councils commitment to equality and diversity and ensure that no discrimination of any kind takes place within the meetings or outside of meetings through any communications channels related to the forum or the sub-groups;
- Not attribute (verbally, in writing or on social media) specific comments made by forum members to any others outside the forum, other than those comments that are formally recorded in the official notes of the meeting;
- Declare any conflicts of interest.

Members will not:

- Act or speak in a way that may be perceived as bullying, abusive or derogatory;
- Discuss identifiable individuals, individual circumstances or disclose confidential information regarding individual and/or personal cases;
- Prevent anyone getting information that they are entitled to;
- Attempt to dominate the meetings for their purpose or the purpose of other groups or organisations they are representing;
- Speak or write on behalf of the forum without the prior agreement of the members;
- Any correspondence sent on behalf of the forum should be agreed in advance by the forum and copies provided to all forum members;
- Make audio or visual recordings of meetings without the consent of all present.

Raising Issues and Concerns

Below is a process by which concerns can be considered if a forum member's behaviour has compromised the principles of the Code of Conduct:

- If any forum member's behaviour gives cause for concern during a meeting, the Chair and/or Community Engagement Officer can pause the meeting to deal with the issue in an appropriate manner.

- If a forum member wishes to raise a concern following a meeting, it is recommended that they do so informally and verbally with the Chair and/or Community Engagement Officer. If a concern arises outside of a meeting, this should be raised by telephone or email.
- If the issue continues, the complainant can raise the concern/complaint in writing to the Chair and/or Community Engagement Officer, outlining the reasons and examples of the basis of the issue.
- The Chair and/or Community Engagement Officer will discuss the issue with the individual(s) against whom the complaint is made, in order to reach a resolution.
- If it is not possible to reach a resolution, the individual may be asked to resign from the forum.
- The forum will be asked to consider withdrawal of membership.

Closing the forum

- Once the main aims and objectives of the forum have been achieved, the forum members, in consultation with the Community Engagement Officer, will consider whether it needs to continue and if so, in what capacity.

