

WARD ALLIANCE – GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK 2018

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Building strong and resilient communities is a key aspect of the Council's Corporate Plan. The Ward Alliances are pivotal to instigating and influencing the strengthening of local communities. They aim to increase social action, community empowerment, equality, diversity and co-production.
- 1.2 The Ward Alliances exist as part of strong Area Governance arrangements to devolve decision making to local level, and to empower local communities to work alongside the Council to design and deliver local solutions to local issues.
- 1.3 The Ward Alliances established across the 21 wards bring together elected ward councillors, citizens and local organisations/groups to:
 - Establish local priorities which the Ward Alliance and its local partners could help to tackle
 - Develop and facilitate community activity to help meet these local priorities
 - Oversee the allocation of the Ward Alliance Fund to support activities which increase community resilience and capacity by involving local people in the creation of local solutions to identified issues
- 1.4 The Ward Alliances also provide an important link between the role of ward councillors within the six Area Councils and their more direct engagement with their local communities at ward level. The local priorities and issues identified by Ward Alliances feed into the Area Council's plans and localised commissioning arrangements, to ensure that grass roots information is being properly used to inform decision making.
- 1.5 Ward Alliances do not work in isolation. Through a programme of self assessment and sharing of good practice between their peers, Ward Alliances strive to:
 - create innovative and effective solutions to local issues
 - ensure projects deliver good value for money
 - maintain a high standard of integrity
 - increase the skills, knowledge and understanding of its members

- 1.6 The Ward Alliances are not formal meetings of the Council, but sit underneath and report into the 6 Area Councils, which are formal meetings of the Council.
- 1.7 Ward Alliances meetings are not public meetings, but all notes from the meetings are available to the wider public as part of published Area Council papers.
- 1.8 This framework outlines a standardised approach to the basic operating procedures of Ward Alliances, ensuring consistency across the Borough. There is recognition that additional, complimentary processes may be introduced to meet the needs of a specific locality.
- 1.9 This framework was revised in early 2018, following the learning of the past five years of work since its inception in 2013. It will be revisited every 2 years to ensure it continues to meet local challenges within communities

2.0 General Observations

- 2.1 For Borough-wide administrative purposes, the term Ward Alliances shall be used to describe the local arrangements for the Council and Community to work together at the Ward level.
- 2.2 The Ward Alliance is a non-political body.
- 2.3 Ward Alliances will be free to determine their own thematic sub-group arrangements providing that these do not place any increased burdens or expectations upon service providers.
- 2.4 **For the purposes of managing external grant applications**, Ward Alliances will be able to establish an independent bank account with four Ward Alliance members as signatures (with two out of four to authorise any expenditure) At least one of the signatories should be a community representative and at least one should be an elected member
- 2.5 Ward Alliances need to operate with minimal officer administrative support. The Community Development Officer (CDO) is there to advise and support the development of the Ward Alliance.
- 2.6 A formal Review of each Ward Alliance will be carried out every 2 years. A standardised approach will be provided by officers in the Area Teams to complete this process.
- 2.7 Ward Alliance meeting notes will be reported to the relevant Area Council.

Ward Alliance Chairs and Secretaries should ensure that meeting notes briefly record decisions taken, but are careful to anonymise all

discussion items to avoid potential reprisals to Ward Alliance members from the wider community.

3.0 The purpose of the Ward Alliance

- 3.1 To work effectively in partnership for the benefit of the Ward, its residents and businesses.
- 3.2 To develop a vision for the Ward with complementary priorities based upon Ward data, community consultation and local intelligence.
- 3.3 To develop a Ward Plan to meet the vision and priorities **and take collective ownership to deliver this Plan**, recognising and utilising all the assets available in the Ward.
- 3.4 To make consensus decisions and oversee the Ward Alliance Fund and any other locally delegated budgets or external grant income allocated to the Ward.
- 3.5 To make arrangements to engage and consult the wider community in setting the Ward priorities and helping to deliver the Ward Plan.
- 3.6 To ensure that the strengths, skills and assets of the Ward are developed to contribute to its sustainability.
- 3.7 Receive and act upon decisions and advice from other forums, and provide information and recommendation to these forums e.g. the Area Council, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Voluntary Action Barnsley/Barnsley CVS, South Yorkshire Police etc.

4.0 Ward Alliance Membership

- 4.1 The membership of the Ward Alliance should be reflective of the community that it serves, both demographic and geographic and is responsible for ensuring equality of opportunity in its representation. **As a minimum**, membership of the Ward Alliance shall be:
 - 4.2 The Three Elected Members for the Ward.
 - 4.3 **A minimum** of six community representatives from the Ward, approved by Ward Councillors following an agreed application and selection process (see section 5). Examples of community representatives *could* include:
 - Faith Group representative(s).
 - Representative(s) of young people aged 16-21, preferably from the school council.
 - Representative(s) from the Private/Business Sector.

- Representative(s) from active community groups or organisations in the Ward.
 - School Governor representative(s)
 - Representative(s) from Voluntary Action Barnsley/Community Partnership.
 - Representative(s) from Town/Parish Councils.
- 4.4 Where two Wards opt to have a joint Ward Alliance, the minimum number of community representatives shall be 12.
- 4.5 All members will be expected to adopt the Ward Alliance's purpose, values and ground rules.

5. Appointment of Ward Alliance Community Representatives

- 5.1 All prospective community representatives should complete and submit the Ward Alliance Membership Application form to ensure that a range of strengths and skills are reflected in the membership (See Appendix A).
- 5.2 Ward Councillors will consider all applications submitted and select community representatives against the agreed criteria. Ward Alliance membership should be broadly representative of the community it serves and should strive to achieve a representative balance in terms of age, gender, race/ethnicity and other protected equality characteristics. Ward Alliances are encouraged to undertake specific targeted recruitment to their membership where this is not the case, in line with current equalities legislation.
- 5.3 Where Ward Councillors reject an application for membership & where a complaint is received, the decision will be reviewed by a Moderation Panel made up of:
- Portfolio Holder - Communities,
 - Respective Area Chair for the Area within which the Ward Alliance sits
 - either the Executive Director (Communities) or the Service Director (Safer, Stronger & Healthier Communities)
- 5.4 All new appointments to Ward Alliances will be reported to the relevant Area Council via Ward Alliance Meeting Notes.
- 5.5 Ward Alliance members will be asked to re-confirm their commitment to the Ward Alliance on a yearly basis.
- 5.6 This re-confirmation of commitment will be sought only if community representatives have fulfilled the agreed Ward Alliance roles as referred to at Section 6.3 of this Framework. This decision will be made

by the three elected members for each Ward Alliance (the six elected members in the case of joint Ward Alliances) who will make clear to the Alliance member in question the reasons that their re-confirmation has not been sought, using the criteria outlined at Section 6.3.

- 5.7 In the event that a complaint is received from the Ward Alliance member who has not been re-confirmed, this will be reviewed using the Moderation Panel arrangements outlined in Section 5.3.
- 5.8 Elected Members will be members of the Ward Alliance for the duration of their time as an elected Ward representative.
- 5.9 No substitutes or deputies will be allowed to attend Ward Alliance meetings on behalf of absent Ward Alliance members.
- 5.10 All new Ward Alliance Representatives (including new elected members) will be taken through an induction process by the Ward Alliance Chair & officers from the Area Team supporting that Alliance, to inform them about the Ward Alliance purpose, roles, responsibilities and processes. This process should include an introduction to this Framework and its associated documentation. At this point, the individual's skills and training/learning needs should also be discussed and assessed, and training/support offered to fill any identified needs.
- 5.11 If a joint Ward Alliance wishes to revert to operating as two single Ward Alliances, this change can be voted in by full membership consensus or by a minimum of a two thirds majority vote.

6.0 Termination of Ward Alliance Membership

A person shall cease to be a Ward Alliance member if:

- 6.1 They do not re-confirm their annual commitment to the Ward Alliance.
- 6.2 They choose to resign in writing.
- 6.3 They miss three consecutive Ward Alliance meetings without apology or explanation agreed by the Ward Alliance, or, they fail to adhere to /uphold the ground rules or fulfil the agreed roles and responsibilities. In this instance, the Chair will make a request on behalf of the Ward Alliance to the Chair of the Area Council and this shall be appropriately recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the Area Council minutes.
- 6.4 They are not re-elected (in the case of Elected Members).

7.0 Ward Alliance Roles

7.1 Roles within the Ward Alliances shall include:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair (optional)
- Treasurer (for the purposes of external grant income only)
- Secretary

All roles shall be undertaken in a voluntary capacity, with the exception of the Secretary.

A community representative Secretary can opt to receive an honorarium payment (currently £500 per annum) for undertaking Ward Alliance secretarial duties.

An elected member can take on the role of Secretary, but must do so on a voluntary and unpaid basis.

In addition to the above, a role profile for the Secretary role will be developed.

Honoraria payments will be made quarterly to the Secretary only upon satisfactory completion of the Secretarial duties during the previous quarter. Authorisation of the payment is made by the Area Council Manager on satisfactory completion of the role.

7.2 Reflecting their 'community leadership' role, the Chair and the Vice Chair (where appointed) of the Ward Alliance will be an Elected Member. Some Ward Alliances may agree to rotate the Chair role between the elected members. Where this is agreed by the Ward Alliance, the elected member taking the Chair for any meeting should be agreed in advance of the meeting, to ensure they are fully involved in setting the meeting agenda beforehand.

7.3 The term of office for the roles of Chair, Vice-Chair (where appointed), Treasurer and Secretary within the Ward Alliance will be reviewed on an annual basis.

7.4 When a vacancy arises for the roles of Treasurer or Secretary, anyone wishing to be nominated should seek another Ward Alliance member to nominate them for selection and these nominations will be made to the Chair.

7.5 The first item on the agenda for the subsequent meeting of the Ward Alliance will be to receive any nominations.

7.6 If there is more than one nominee for any position, ballot papers will then be prepared to allow for members to vote in secret for the person that they wish to be appointed for each role.

7.7 The result of the ballot will be declared by the Chair.

8.0 Operation of meetings & making recommendations

- 8.1 All Ward Alliance members will operate according to the agreed Ground Rules – See Appendix B. These ground rules should be revisited as part of the formal Ward Alliance review completed every 2 years.
- 8.2 It is ultimately the responsibility of the Ward Alliance Chair to ensure that all members of the Ward Alliance adhere to the agreed ground rules and to challenge anyone who does not. In addition, any member of the Ward Alliance can challenge another member whose behaviour does not meet the standards outlined in the ground rules.
- 8.3 A quorum (minimum number) of Ward Alliance Members needs to be present before any decision can be reached. For Ward Alliance meetings the quorum shall be one third of the membership, with at least one elected member present. Where there is a 2 ward joint Ward Alliance, the quorum shall be one third of the membership with at least one elected member and one community representative from each ward present.
- 8.4 Ward Alliances are expected to achieve agreement through consensus in relation to all decisions.
- 8.5 If it is not possible to reach a consensus decision, this will be taken on the basis of a majority vote amongst those present at the meeting.
- 8.6 In the event of an equality of votes, Ward Alliance Members will be asked to reconsider the matter under discussion and then vote again. In the event that a majority decision cannot be reached following the second vote, the matter will be deferred until the next meeting to allow for further investigation to be undertaken.
- 8.7 Decisions made shall be properly recorded in the action notes of the meeting by the Secretary and sent out within 2 weeks of the meeting.
- 8.8 Elected Members must follow the Council Code of Conduct when they attend Ward Alliance meetings. This includes declaring an interest where they or a company they are involved in or employed by will benefit from any matter the Ward Alliance is considering. This requirement also applies to Ward Alliance community members and is intended to avoid accusations of bias in decision-making.
- 8.9 Ward Alliance members must declare any interest that they may have in an item to be discussed at a meeting as soon as they are aware of this and preferably in advance. This should include the nature of that interest. Where a Ward Alliance member or their company or employer has a direct pecuniary / financial interest in the matter in question, they must take no part in the decision and withdraw from the meeting for the

duration of that item and this shall be recorded in the notes. Failing to do so is a legal offence for Elected Members.

- 8.10 Where there are significant concerns about the operation or progress of a Ward Alliance (including the Ward Alliance Fund) these will initially be raised with the Ward Alliance Chair. Where unable to resolve, the matter will be discussed with the respective Area Chair. Where the Area Chair is also the Chair of the Ward Alliance in question, the matter will be referred to another Area Chair. If resolution cannot be achieved, the matter will be raised with the Portfolio Holder (Communities) and the Executive Director (Communities).

9.0 Ward Alliance Fund

- 9.1 The Ward Alliance will make all recommendations relating to the allocation of Ward Alliance Funds. If agreed by its membership, the Ward Alliance can ask applicants for the Fund to provide more information or to present their proposal to a meeting of the Ward Alliance before approval is given.
- 9.2 All members of the Ward Alliance will have an equal say in the decision making process. The decision making process shall be the same as that outlined in section 8.
- 9.3 All projects supported through this fund should have clear Social Benefits for the ward. At least 50% of projects supported by Ward Alliance Fund in each Ward should be matched with volunteer hours.
- 9.4 Ward Alliance Fund recommendations will be signed by the Chair of the Ward Alliance and countersigned by the relevant Area Manager and the Head of Service for Stronger Communities in the formal exercise of their delegated powers.
- 9.5 Transparency in decision making will be assured via the reporting of Ward Alliance notes to the relevant Area Council meeting.
- 9.6 The Ward Alliance has the responsibility to allocate available funding in a timely manner, and wherever possible to allow sufficient time for projects to spend their allocated funds within the current financial year.
- 9.7 Further details are contained in the guidance notes and application form for the Ward Alliance Fund.
- 9.8 Ward Alliances can request that Ward Alliance Funded projects acknowledge the financial support they have received by displaying a BMBC or Area Council logo on promotional material.

The Ward Alliance Framework agreed: Insert date of approval at Cabinet
(White)

Date of next review – October 2020

Appendix A

Ward Alliance Membership Application Form

Personal details:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Ward:

Signed:

Date: _____

For more information or if you need any help filling in this form please contact your local Area Team. If you are unsure how to contact them, please phone 01226 773016 or email lovewhereyoulive@barnsley.gov.uk so we can put you in touch.

If you are interested in becoming a member of your local Ward Alliance please complete the following questions. Please ensure that you cover all the relevant points. The selection panel, made up of your local elected members will use this information to make a decision.

A Ward Alliance member will:

1. Be passionate about making their community a better place to live and work for everyone.
2. Get actively involved in their community and encourage others to do likewise.
3. Take pride in their role on the Ward Alliance and act as an ambassador for the work they do.
4. Utilise their skills, experience and knowledge to support their community.
5. Be able to put aside personal interests and consider what is best for the whole community.
6. Help with the development and delivery of a Ward Plan.
7. Understand and agree to abide by the Ward Alliance Governance Framework, including the Ward Alliance Ground Rules.

Please tell us about yourself and why you want to become a member of the Ward Alliance.

	Question:	Answer:		Score from 0 - 4 (for selection panel use only)
1.	Tell us why you are interested in getting involved in your community as a Ward Alliance Member? (Max 100 words)			
2.	Tell us about the relevant skills, experience and knowledge you could bring to support your community as a Ward Alliance member? (Max 100 words)			
4.	What do you think are the main issues in your area and how could you work with the Ward Alliance to improve them? (max. 100 words)			
5	Do you agree to abide by the Ward Alliance Governance Framework and Ground Rules?	Yes	No	

Please ensure that you complete all the questions fully. Any questions which are not answered will receive a zero score.

Appendix B

Ward Alliance Ground Rules

The following are suggested ground rules for the operation of Ward Alliances. It is recommended that each Ward Alliance works together to set its own set of ground rules using this document as a guide.

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- No party politics should be brought to the meeting
- Each member of the Ward Alliance has the same right to speak at each meeting and have their views and opinions treated with equal respect.
- Ward Alliance members with power and rank must leave their rank at the door
- Anyone trying to use their power to intimidate or over-rule other members will be challenged
- Anyone having side conversations during a meeting will be challenged
- As little jargon as possible is to be used during meetings. When it is used, it must be explained
- Every meeting must be chaired by the appointed Chair or the Vice-Chair in their absence. If neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair is available, those present will vote to select a Chair for that meeting.
- Notes must be taken at every meeting, which should include the actions and decisions agreed.
- Notes from the previous meeting must be approved.
- Agendas must be adhered to.
- All mobile phones to be switched off before each meeting
- All questions must be addressed through the Chair
- All Ward Alliance Representatives should publicly support Ward Alliance decisions, even if their own view may have been different during the Ward Alliance meeting discussion.