APPLICATION FOR REDESIGNATION OF THE ST QUINTIN AND WOODLANDS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

History of the Forum

1.1 This application is being made to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum and the boundary of the StQW neighbourhood area were designated by RB Kensington and Chelsea in July 2013. This means that the initial five year lifespan of the Forum will come to an end in July 2018 and that formal redesignation is needed if the Forum is to continue with its work.

1.2 No variation to the designated boundary of the neighbourhood area is being sought. The neighbourhood forum now has over 420 members. A list of 21 and more people living or working in the neighbourhood area, and who are members of the forum, has been submitted to RB Kensington and Chelsea along with this application, to meet statutory requirements. Current councillors in St Helens and Dalgarno wards are members and frequently attend Forum meetings. The Forum’s website is at www.stqw.org.

1.3 The map below shows the area for which we are seeking redesignation of the Forum’s neighbourhood planning powers, in order that the Forum may in future make modifications to the StQW Neighbourhood Plan or prepare a replacement Plan when needed, in accordance with the provisions of the 2017 Neighbourhood Planning Act and Regulations.
The Forum prepared the current StQW Neighbourhood Plan during 2013 and 2014. The Draft Plan was consulted on in summer 2015, and independently examined with a public hearing in September 2015. A number of modifications were recommended by the Examiner and included in the document. The Referendum Version of the Plan was voted on at a referendum held in the neighbourhood area in February 2016.

The Plan was supported by a 92% majority of those voting, on a 23% turnout. Since that time the Borough Council has been applying the StQW policies and site allocations, when determining planning applications in the neighbourhood. The 2017 Neighbourhood Planning Act has confirmed that the status of a ‘post examination neighbourhood plan’ is that it should be treated as being in force.

Formal ‘making’ of the Plan as part of the Borough’s Development Plan has awaited the outcome of a legal challenge by the landowner and prospective developer at Nursery Lane W10. This legal action is now concluded.

Redesignation of the Forum

2.1 Redesignation of a neighbourhood forum after a five year period is a requirement of the 2011 Localism Act (with the relevant provisions included in the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) as amended) and in neighbourhood planning regulations.

2.2 There is no prescribed format for an application for redesignation. This application explains what the StQW Forum has been doing to date, and what it intends to do in the next five year period.

Activities of the Neighbourhood Forum

3.1. Since the referendum on the StQW Draft Plan in 2015, the Forum has sought to ensure that the policies and site designations and allocations are implemented.

3.2 An important feature of the StQW Plan is the designation as Local Green Space of three remaining ‘backland’ sites, behind the terraced streets of the neighbourhood. In relation to one of these (at Nursery Lane W10) the landowner acting jointly with a prospective developer applied for Judicial Review of the RB Kensington and Chelsea decision of December 2015 to advance the Draft STQW Plan to its referendum.

3.3. The Council defended its decision, and the StQW Forum was an interested party to the legal challenge (Legard v. RBKC CO/399/2016). The Judicial Review application was dismissed, on all grounds, by Mr Justice Dove in the High Court in January 2018.

3.4. The Forum is grateful to the Council for defending this claim. The StQW Forum was an Interested Party in the case, and is also grateful for the support given by members of the Forum, the Nursery Gardens Action Group, the Kensington Society, and our Counsel at Francis Taylor Buildings.

3.5. On the other two designated Local Green Spaces, the West London Bowling Club has gone from strength to strength in terms of the range of its activities. The Methodist Church land at Kelfield Gardens continues to provide much valued playspace for the New Studio Pre-School playgroup.

3.6. The Forum’s aims of increasing vitality and activity levels in Latimer Road have borne some fruit, with the opening of the Playground Theatre in a former light industrial unit. Until recently, uncertainties over the final outcome to the legal challenge on the StQW Plan has hindered scope for bringing forward other development proposals for the street, including mixed use redevelopment of Units 1-14.
3.7. On the **housing** front, the StQW Draft Plan allocated three sites in the neighbourhood for new housing, two of which were endorsed by the Examiner and included in the final plan. On the third site (at Crowthorne Road), planning permission for a mixed use development had already been granted at the time of the Plan’s examination. The present state of the commercial and housing market in North Kensington has resulted in this development remaining unbuilt as at early 2018. The Forum is actively encouraging building owners in Latimer Road, and at 137a Highlever Road, to make use of the StQW site allocations and the new scope for residential use thereby provided. Identification of small housing sites is a key feature of the Draft London Plan and the new draft NPPF.

3.8. On the StQW policies for **shopping parades**, the new StQW policies have supported refurbishment and re-use of a longstanding vacant shop in St Helens Gardens, for D class educational use. Vacant shops in the local parades remains an issue, and the Forum is discussing with RBKC what further interventions may help.

3.9. On **transport** issues, the Forum has continued to lobby for an additional London Overground station at ‘Westway Circus’. This would significantly improve PTAL levels in North Kensington, and this proposal is now included as part of the RBKC Local Plan Partial Review. The Forum has made the same case in its responses to the OPDC Draft Local Plan (at Regulation 18 and 19 stages) and to the Draft London Plan. The lack of capacity in the local road network to adjust to traffic flows resulting from developments in Wood Lane, and to the impact of Westfield 2 and regeneration of Old Oak, remains a major concern for our residents.

3.10 The StQW Forum responded to consultations at each stage of Partial Review of the Local Plan for Kensington and Chelsea, and participated in the Examination in Public. The Forum supports many parts of the Local Plan, while wanting the Council to go further in allowing mixed use in Employment Zones, subject to no net loss of Employment floorspace. The StQW Plan and its policies are fully recognised in the updated RBKC Local Plan, and provide a ‘place-based’ planning context alongside the series of other ‘Place’ chapters prepared by the local authority.

3.11 The Chair of the StQW Forum has since late 2015 acted as a volunteer adviser in establishing a neighbourhood forum for Old Oak. A designation application for a large cross-boundary Old Oak neighbourhood area (280 hectares) was in large part ‘refused’ by the OPDC and by LB Hammersmith & Fulham, in late 2017. An area of around 10% of the total applied for, on the western side of Wormwood Scrubs in East Acton, was designated by OPDC in response to the designation application. An Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum has also been designated. A second and separate small area (the early 20th century Old Oak Estate) was designated by LBHF in 2017. The StQW Chair will continue to be involved in plans being made by the OPDC, given the scale of their impact on the StQW neighbourhood.

3.12 Through its sister body, the Helens Residents Association, the Forum monitors all planning application in the neighbourhood, and supports/objects in accordance with RBKC and StQW policies. The fact that the latter involve some neighbourhood variation of Borough-wide policies has proved significant on a number of occasions, with StQW policies being slightly less restrictive on certain conservation issues.

3.13 In light of the Forum’s experience over the past years, the Forum’s management committee and membership are confident that the Forum and the neighbourhood plan will continue to continue to play a valuable part in the overall planning system for the area, over a further period.
Updating of the StQW Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be necessary in around 2020, when OPDC proposals and the pace of development at Old Oak become clearer.

**Governance of the StQW neighbourhood Forum**

4.1 As part of this application for redesignation of the StQW Forum, the Council will wish to consider the governance arrangements for the forum.

4.2 The forum has proved to be a stable body since its designation in 2013. Membership of the Forum is the same as for the St Helens Residents Association (the organisation which acted as the ‘qualifying body’ in establishing the forum). This membership is now over 420 local residents and a number of businesses.

4.3 Open meetings of the forum are held several times a year and attract a sizable audience (40-60 members). This usually includes ward councillors from Dalgarno and St Helens wards. Monthly newsletters are circulated to members and posted on our website at www.stqw.org.

4.4 The constitution of the forum has remained unchanged since its inaugural meeting in 2013. Membership is open to anyone who lives or works in the designated area.

5.5 The management committee of the forum is made up of between 8-12 members, as fixed by the constitution. Current membership is 11 members, as listed on the StQW website.

**Conclusion**

6.1 We ask that RBKC as the local planning authority undertakes early consultation on this redesignation application, in order that this can be completed and a decision made before July 3rd 2018.

**Contact point for the StQW Neighbourhood Forum**

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