

CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTH TYNESIDE REGION EQUALITY FORUM.

1. Name.

Page 01of10

The name of the Organisation shall be the SOUTH TYNESIDE REGION EQUALITY FORUM (STREF), for the following document it will be named as the Forum.

2. Aims.

The aims of the Forum are:

- a) To work towards the elimination of all discrimination in the Borough of South Tyneside and promote tolerance and understanding within the community for all citizens regardless of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation or ability.
- b) To address the problem of social disadvantage and exclusion within the whole community of the Borough of South Tyneside.
- c) To promote good citizenship, reduce social isolation and develop a good sense of community spirit within the wider community of the Borough of South Tyneside.

3. Membership.

3.1 Membership of the Forum will be reliant on the individual members of the Forum being fully open about all the organisations and individuals that they represent

3.1.1 Representatives must faithfully promote the opinions and views

of those they represent and must not promote their personal opinions without first declaring the fact.

3.2 The elected officers of the Forum, who will be elected from current members of the Forum at the Annual General Meeting by ballot paper, are:

Chair.

Vice Chair

Secretary

Treasurer

3.3 Membership of the Forum will be open to:

3.3.1 Any individual over the age of 18 years who is living, working or studying in the Borough of South Tyneside and who has a commitment to furthering the aims of the Forum.

3.3.2 Representatives of charitable bodies, voluntary organisations, community groups and statutory bodies active in the Borough of South Tyneside with a commitment to furthering the aims of the Forum. Statutory bodies will have up to two representatives, with the exception of South Tyneside Council. If a representative from a statutory body is unable to attend any meeting of the Forum a deputising representative can replace them.

3.3.3 The Committee will agree who is acceptable as an individual member or representative within the aims and spirit of the constitution.

3.4 New members wishing to attend STREF are to submit a letter to the Chair declaring their interest and who they represent.

3.5 In the event of a representative resigning or otherwise leaving their organisation or statutory body, they shall immediately cease to be a member of the Forum.

3.6 The statutory bodies' representatives are:

3.6.1 Two appointed members from the Northumbria Police.

3.6.2 The South Tyneside Council Lead Member for Diversity and Equality plus three named Councillors.

3.6.3 Up to 2 representatives from any other qualifying organisation, member group or member body.

4. The Executive Committee.

For the purpose of this document it will be called the Committee.

4.1 The Committee is the body responsible for the policy, activities and management of the Forum.

4.2 The Committee shall consist of the elected officers of the Forum and up to 5 other members of the Forum elected at the Annual General Meeting and will hold office until the following Annual General Meeting or except when section 4.3 applies. A quorum shall be four members of the Committee, including at least one elected officer plus the Chair whenever possible. The 5 other members from the Forum must have attended at least 2 Forum meetings in the last 6 months to be eligible to be elected onto the Committee.

4.3 A member of the Committee shall cease to hold the position:

4.3.1 If they become incapable, by reason of mental incapability, physical illness or injury, of managing and administering their own affairs.

4.3.2 Resigns their office by notice in writing to the Chair or Secretary

4.3.3 Is absent without good and sufficient reason from 3 consecutive meetings of the Committee.

4.3.4 The Committee passes a resolution, agreed by three quarters of the Committee present, that such a Committee member shall be removed from office.

4.4 The Committee can fill all casual vacancies on the Committee by appointing another member from the Forum who has at least 6 months membership and has attended at least 2 Forum meetings in the previous 6 months. They can hold office until the next Annual General Meeting and will be eligible for re-election.

4.5 The Committee may co-opt any person with specialised knowledge, skills or experience for a specified period of time, provided that co-opted members account for no more than one third of the actual full membership of the Committee. Co-opted members do not have voting rights.

4.6 All business of the Committee will be decided by a simple majority vote. No member will have more than 1 vote, except for the Chair who will hold the deciding vote in the event of a tied vote.

4.7 The Committee will have the power to exclude any organisation or individual from membership of the Forum if that organisation or individual will not or cannot fully comply with the aims of the Forum or conditions of membership of the Forum. The Committee will report their decision to the Forum at the first meeting immediately following the decision being made.

4.7.1 The representative of the organisation concerned or the individual concerned will be written to by the Committee informing them why they are being considered for expulsion and will be asked to respond in writing. The representative of the organisation concerned or individual concerned will have the right to be heard by the Committee before the final decision is made.

4.7.2 The Committee will write to the excluded organisation or individual to inform them of the reasons for the exclusion.

5. Election of officers and members of the Executive Committee.

Nominations for Forum elected officers and membership of the Committee must be in writing and in the hands of the Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. Nominations must be seconded by another Forum member with membership of at least 6 months.

6. Executive Committee Procedures.

6.1 The Committee will meet not less than 3 times per year plus the Annual General Meeting, at least 10 working days notice will be given to the members concerned.

6.2 An emergency or special meeting of the Committee may be called at any time, provided that at least 3 days notice has been given to the members concerned.

6.3 The Committee may appoint any sub committees as they feel is necessary and will determine the composition, powers, terms of reference and the duration of existence of the subcommittee.

6.3.1 The appointed subcommittee will report back to the Committee when required or as soon as is possible, with the agreement of the Committee.

6.3.2 The appointed subcommittee will keep full minutes of all actions and proceedings, which will be open to full scrutiny of the Committee.

6.3.3 The Committee can make rules to govern the actions and proceedings of a subcommittee provided that such rules are not inconsistent with the aims of the Forum or the provisions of this constitution.

6.4 The elected Secretary of the Forum will ensure the safekeeping of all of the Forums documents and records as far as is reasonably practicable.

7. Annual General Meeting.

For the purpose of this document it will be called the AGM.

7.1 The AGM of the Forum will be held annually.

7.1.1 It will not be more than 15 months after the preceding AGM.

7.1.2 It will be held at a place and time determined by the Committee.

7.2 The AGM agenda will be:

7.2.1 Report and agreement of the Forum accounts.

7.2.2 A report of the Forums activities since the last AGM.

7.2.3 Election of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and members of the Committee. Plus a representative to the Local Planning Group of the Borough of South Tyneside. Also an independent person to scrutinise the accounts.

7.2.4 Appointment of an independent person to examine the accounts.

7.2.5 Discussion and decisions on any relevant matters for which qualifying prior notice has been given.

7.3 The Secretary will give at least 28 clear days notice in writing of the AGM to all current members and organisations representatives.

7.3.1 The notice will request any relevant matters to be discussed at the AGM to be submitted in writing to the Secretary within 14 days of the AGM being called. The Secretary will distribute these matters to be discussed to the current members and organisations representatives 7 days before the AGM.

7.4 A Special AGM of the Forum can be called at any time that:

7.4.1 The Committee considers it is required to comply with this constitution or the aims of the Forum.

7.4.2 At least one third of the current members of the Forum consider it is required to comply with this constitution or the aims of the Forum.

7.5 The Special AGM will be held within 14 days of the request and reason being informed to the Secretary. The Secretary will give at least 7 clear days notice in writing to all current members and organisations representatives of the Forum; giving the time, place and reason for the Special AGM.

7.6 Quorums.

7.6.1 At an AGM will be one third of the current members of the Forum which will include at least 1 elected officer.

7.6.2 At a Special AGM will be at least one third of the current members of the Forum or 25 members, whichever is less which will include at least one elected officer.

7.6.3 In the event that no quorum is present at an AGM or Special AGM, or the meeting has to be abandoned, the meeting will stand adjourned and be reconvened 14 days later at a time and place set before the original meeting is disbanded. At the reconvened meeting, the members present will be deemed to form a quorum.

7.7 The Chair of an AGM or Special AGM will be the current Chair, or in their absence the current Vice Chair. In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair the AGM or Special AGM members present will appoint a stand in Chair for the meeting only.

7.8 All matters arising at an AGM or Special AGM will be decided by simple majority vote. No member present will have more than 1 vote. In the event of a tied vote the Chair will have the deciding vote.

7.9 The current Chair and elected officers at the beginning of the meeting will hold office until the conclusion of the AGM or Special AGM and will be eligible for re-election at the meeting.

7.10 Forum members with less than 6 months membership will not be eligible to vote at an AGM or Special AGM.

8. Finance.

8.1 All funds raised from whatever source must only be used to further the aims of the Forum.

8.2 A bank account shall be opened in the name of the Forum and all monies raised will be paid into this account.

8.3 There will be 3 signatories to the account, at least 2 signatories will sign any cheques issued in the name of the Forum. The signatories will be agreed at an AGM or Special AGM. They will not be related by birth or relationship or work.

8.4 The Treasurer will keep a record of all financial dealings and transactions. The Treasurer will present reports to the Forum whenever requested in advance and to the Committee when they meet routinely. The Treasurer will present the Annual Accounts at any AGM.

8.5 At least once per calendar year the Treasurer will have the accounts examined by the independent person agreed at the previous AGM. The independent person will report to the Chair and Secretary of the Forum who will be responsible for any action required and to give the report to the AGM.

8.6 The Committee will decide any remuneration to anyone on the individual merits of the case. Any remuneration will not be accepted as a precedent. Any Committee member who is related by birth, partnership

or work to the person being considered for remuneration, will be barred from sitting on a relevant interview panel or deciding body.

9 Amendments to the constitution.

9.1 Requests to amend this constitution must be sent to the Secretary at least 14 days before the AGM is held. The Secretary will include the suggested amendment in the matters to be discussed at the AGM.

9.2 Amendments will be passed by at least a two thirds majority of the vote at the AGM.

9.3 No amendment will be accepted that does not meet the declared aims and conditions of membership of the Forum.

10 Dissolution of the Forum.

10.1 The Forum can be dissolved at any time by a resolution passed by a two thirds majority of members present at a Special Meeting called for this specific purpose.

10.2 The Secretary will give at least 21 clear day's notice of the Special Meeting to all current members and organisations representatives giving the reason for the Special Meeting.

10.3 In the event of dissolution, the Committee will be the body responsible for the orderly winding up of the Forums affairs.

10.4 After the satisfactory resolving of all debts and liabilities, the Committee will transfer any funds and assets to such other organisations, as agreed at the Special Meeting called to dissolve the Forum, that have aims similar to some or all of the aims of the Forum.

10.5 The dissolution and transfer of funds will be reported by the final Secretary, or an agreed substitute, to the current members and organisations representatives of the dissolved Forum, the South Tyneside Borough Council Local Planning Group and in the Shields Gazette.

11 Notices.

For the purpose of this constitution all notices to current members and organisations representatives will be counted from the date the notices were placed in the post or e-mailed.

12 Declaration.

This constitution was adopted at the AGM held on: 04 September 2014.
Original signed by:

Yusef Abdullah Chair

Date: 04 September 2014.

Louise Barbe Secretary

Date: 04 September 2014.