

# Terms of reference for a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



## Background

(.....) Town/Parish Council has determined that it intends to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and has established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to oversee the process.

## 1. Purpose and Mission Statement

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (“the NPSG”) is to design and facilitate a process that will result in the preparation of a draft Neighbourhood Plan for (.....), in order to achieve the respective vision for this Town/Parish.

### The process will be:

**Inclusive** – offering everyone who lives or works in (.....) opportunities to participate fully in the plan.

**Comprehensive** - identifying all the important aspects of life in (.....) for which we need to plan for the future.

**Positive** – bringing forward proposals which will improve the quality of life in (.....).

**Supported** – where there is a need for professional support to complete the process.

## 2. Tasks

The NPSG, along with its technical advisers, will undertake the following tasks:

1. Prepare an outline process for producing the Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Promote the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan to encourage participation and the submission of views and ideas.
3. Organise meetings to gather views and consult on ideas.
4. Assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Town/Parish.
5. Liaise with relevant businesses and organisations to secure their input in the process.
6. Ensure that the views of the full range and diversity of interest Groups are sought through the process, as far as this is reasonably possible.
7. Analyse the views, ideas and proposals received during the planning process and use them to prepare a draft Plan.
8. Keep the Council fully informed of progress and, where appropriate, present NPSG Meeting Minutes for acceptance and subsequent adoption.

### **3. Membership of the Neighbourhood Planning Team and Quorum**

- Membership of the NPSG shall comprise no less than (number?) members. Additional members can be co-opted if required.
- The Group shall review its membership from time to time.
- The Group will contain a Town/Parish Council representative.
- Where appropriate, officers from East Suffolk Council and other key stakeholders will be invited to attend Meetings in an advisory capacity.
- The NPSG shall be quorate when (Number?) members are present, of whom at least one must be an elected Town/Parish Council representative.
- The technical advisers will not have voting rights.

### **5. Chair of the Neighbourhood Planning Team**

- The Group shall elect a Chair and Deputy Chair from their number.
- If the Chair is not present, the Deputy Chair shall take the Meeting. If neither is present, members shall elect a Chair for the meeting from amongst their number.
- Elections shall take place at the beginning of each administrative year.

### **6. Officers and Clerking Arrangements for the Neighbourhood Planning Team**

- Notice and associated papers shall normally be despatched three clear days before the date of the meeting. E-mail will be used where possible.
- The NPSG shall keep Minutes or Notes of proceedings which will be recorded and open to public scrutiny.
- A Signing-In Register will be available at each Meeting for the purposes of recording those present and apologies for absence within the Minutes or Notes.

### **7. Frequency, Timing and Procedure of Meetings for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

- The NPSG shall meet not less than once every quarter.
- Any changes to NPSG Terms of Reference will require Town/Parish Council approval.

### **8. Secretarial Arrangements for the Working Groups**

- Each meeting shall nominate a Secretary/note taker. The sole duty of the Secretary is to provide brief Meeting Notes of each Meeting. A different member can be nominated as Secretary/note taker for each meeting.
- Meeting Notes must be provided to the Planning and Development Committee/Town/Parish Council, ideally in electronic form, and will be a matter of public record.

### **9. Working groups**

The Steering Group may establish such working groups as it considers necessary to carry out the functions specified by the Steering Group.

The purpose of each working group is to assist the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan for the community.

Each working group should:

- Each working group will tackle a specific issue, or set of issues, or the needs and opportunities facing a specific group of people within the community.
- Each working group should have a lead person.
- Clearly set out its purpose e.g. “to help young people (under 18 years) in the community identify their needs, ideas and concerns and to feed this into the consultation for the NDP.”
- Outline how it will gather information and carry out consultations.
- Set out the timescale and estimated costs of gathering information and carrying out consultations.
- Appoint at least one, but preferably two members, to attend the regular NPSG meetings (those persons may already be members of the NPSG).

Each working group will be responsible for organising its own meetings and must provide a progress report to the NPSG meetings.

Financial expenditure in excess of £50 (or other amount as agreed by the Town/Parish Council) must be approved by the NPSG. Receipted expenses for reimbursement should be passed to the Town/Parish Clerk or steering group financial co-ordinator (if there is one) on a monthly basis with reasons for the expenditure clearly given.

**For further information please contact:**

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