

## <NAME> NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

### (SAMPLE) TERMS OF REFERENCE

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#### 1. Background

- 1.1 <name> Parish/Town Council has resolved to produce a Neighbourhood Plan (The Plan) and has determined that The Plan shall cover the area of <describe limits of the designated area>.
- 1.2 The Parish/Town Council, while retaining full responsibility for The Plan, recognises that the content of The Plan must be driven by the community and draw on skills and expertise from outside the Council.
- 1.3 A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been created to lead the project to successful completion.

#### 2. Name

- 2.1 The name of the group shall be the **<Name> Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG)**

#### 3. Purpose

The purpose of the NPSG is the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and associated tasks leading to its adoption.

In undertaking this, its further objectives will be to:

- 3.1 Consider the options and develop policies to inform the future development and use of land in the neighbourhood area
- 3.2 Be aware of the development areas identified in the Local Plan, including establishing of further development areas if they are required
- 3.3 Ensure the Neighbourhood Plan is supported by an effective on-going programme of communication and consultation with the community, businesses, Rutland County Council District Council, developers, adjoining parishes and other key third parties
- 3.4 Identify sources of funding
- 3.5 Liaise with statutory and other relevant authorities and organisations to ensure The Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible
- 3.6 Identify ways of involving the whole community and gather the views and opinions of as many groups and organisations in the community as possible
- 3.7 Determine the types of consultation and information gathering to be used
- 3.8 Liaise with, and direct the work of, consultants and specialists engaged to further The Plan as appropriate
- 3.9 Be responsible for the analysis arising from such consultation and the production and distribution of the final reports
- 3.10 Conform to national policies and Rutland County Council District Council's Local Plan and with EU and Human Rights legislation

- 3.11 Report back regularly to <Name> Parish/Town Council on progress, significant issues and budgetary implications
- 3.12 Present key documents and the draft Neighbourhood Plan for consultation with the Parish/Town Council, local residents and businesses, Rutland County Council District Council and the Independent Examiner, and assist in arrangements for the Referendum
- 3.13 Present recommendations for the implementation of The Plan

#### **4. Membership and Conduct**

- 4.1 The NPSG shall be formed from current parish/town councillors and local members of the community and shall include not fewer than <six> and up to <12> members (no more than <six> to be Parish/Town Councillors in any capacity), to be ratified by the <Name> Parish/Town Council. The Parish/Town Clerk, or a representative from the Parish/Town Council office, can be present in an *ex-officio*, non-voting capacity at all meetings.
- 4.2 The NPSG may co-opt additional support to carry out specific tasks for as short or long a period as necessary.
- 4.3 Membership is voluntary.
- 4.4 All members of the NPSG, must abide by the Code of Conduct of <Name> Parish/Town Council and in doing so must submit a register of interests.
- 4.5 All members of the NPSG must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to the decisions or recommendations made by it. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of interest in land or business or any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the NPSG.
- 4.6 A person shall cease to be a member of the NPSG upon notifying the Chair in writing of their wish to resign.
- 4.7 Up to two substitute members may be named (one councillor and one other).
- 4.8 The Chair and Vice-chair of the NPSG will be appointed by <Name> Parish/Town Council. **or**  
The Chair and Vice-chair of the NPSG will be elected by the members of the NSPG at its first meeting after any nominations are seconded, and then by show of hands only if more than one candidate is nominated. If only one candidate is nominated and seconded then they are automatically appointed.
- 4.9 In the absence of the Chair or Vice Chair, the NPSG will elect a Chair from the members present at the meeting.

#### **5. Supporting Officers and Administration**

- 5.1 Administrative support for the group may involve appointing officers, as required, including a Secretary, which will be appointed by a simple majority of the NPSG.

#### **6. Meetings**

- 6.1 The NPSG shall arrange its own meeting schedule and shall meet as required. At least 72 hours' notice of a meeting will be given to members by email and such notice shall detail the matters to be discussed. Shorter notice for urgent matters may be given if agreed by a majority of members.
- 6.2 Matters requiring a vote shall be decided by a simple majority of votes of the NPSG members present. The Chair of the meeting has a casting vote.
- 6.3 The NPSG is quorate provided all of the following apply:
- a minimum of <four> members are present
  - at least one support officer is present
  - there are no fewer than two councillors
  - there is at least one community member
  - the meeting has been properly convened
- 6.4 The Secretary shall keep a record of meetings and circulate minutes to NPSG members and the Clerk of the Council not more than 7 days after each meeting. In the absence of a Secretary, the NPSG shall elect a member present to keep the record.
- 6.5 NPSG meetings and activities shall follow good practice. The NPSG may seek, and shall follow, the guidance of the Parish/Town Clerk in regard to any procedural matters.
- 6.6 The steering group may form sub-committees

## **7. Affiliations, Interests and Contributions**

- 7.1 The NPSG shall not itself be affiliated to any political party. It is recognised that town councillors and community members may have such affiliations which shall be declared where relevant.
- 7.2 The Localism Act and <Name> Parish/Town Council's Code of Conduct will apply to all members of the NPSG. All members of the NPSG must declare any pecuniary interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a decision of the NSPG. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of land or a business, or any other matter that may be considered to be relevant. Such declarations are to be recorded and publicly available. Having declared an interest, that member shall not take part in a discussion or vote on the related issue. In the event of disagreement, the decision of the Chair shall be binding.
- 7.3 Organisations and businesses may assist in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and may contribute to the cost of producing it. Details of any donations or assistance must be made publicly available and must not influence the recommendations of The Plan.

## **8. Reporting and Communication**

- 8.1 The Steering Group is established having full-delegated authority from the Parish/Town Council to deliver its plan-making functions up to and including publication of a Preferred Options Consultation Draft

Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Group will report to each meeting of the Parish/Town Council setting out progress on its work. The Parish/Town Council will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.

- 8.2 The plan-making process remains in the control of the Parish/Town Council as the qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of <Name> Parish/Town Council with appropriate recognition of the Parish/Town Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

## **9. Freedom of Information and Access to Information**

- 9.1 As an extension of the Parish/Town Council, and in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (2000), the NPSG will make available to the public: minutes of meetings, policies and procedures, details of its organisation and structure and information on budget, expenditure and allowances.
- 9.2 Meetings will be informal and will usually be open to members of the public. However, formal minutes will be kept. It will be rare for meetings not to be open to members of the public and, when they are not so (for example when exempt information is discussed), an explanation will be given.

## **10. Finance**

- 10.1 The NPSG will apply for grant assistance with costs and submit a budget proposal to the Parish/Town Council for support financing.
- 10.2 The NPSG shall not have its own bank account. The Parish/Town Council shall be responsible for all budgetary matters, expenditure, monitoring and reporting.
- 10.3 All items of expenditure shall be referred to the Parish/Town Council for approval and action.

## **11. Changes to these Terms of Reference**

- 11.1 Should any amendments be required to these Terms of Reference, the changes must be ratified by the Parish/Town Council.

## **12. Dissolution of the NPSG**

- 12.1 The NPSG shall continue to operate for two years or until the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, whichever is the sooner.
- 12.2 Upon dissolution of the NPSG, any remaining resources will be passed to Parish/Town Council.