NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE TEMPLATE

[*name*] Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

***Background***

When was the decision made to prepare a neighbourhood plan?

What is the neighbourhood plan area?

***Members***

You should set out the members of the Steering Group. Identifying the responsibilities of members is important at this stage (this might include things such as: attending meetings, consultation events, preparation of topic paper, etc.). At this stage you should try to include as much detail as possible. If you know the people that will be undertaking these roles you should include their names at this stage. This table should be updated throughout the process to include new members who join the steering group.

A good way to present this information is in a table.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Role | Responsibility  | Member  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

How will you consider when a member of the community wishes to join the Steering Group?

Please keep in mind that if a member of the community wants to help with the production of the neighbourhood plan it is not necessary for them to be a member of the steering group to help.

***Role of the Steering Group***

Set out tasks that the steering group will be responsible for. You should try to look forward so that you include tasks for the whole neighbourhood plan process.

For example, the tasks for the steering group might include (please note that these are only a few examples):

* *Preparing the outline process for producing the neighbourhood plan.*
* *Promote the process of preparing the neighbourhood plan to encourage community participation.*
* *Organise meetings and appoint sub-groups to gather views and consult on ideas.*
* *Submit a draft version of the neighbourhood plan to the parish council by or before XXXX.*

***Meeting Arrangements***

How frequently should the Steering Group meet?

Who is expected to attend these meetings?

What is the procedure if a member of the Steering Group is unable to attend a meeting?

How will the meeting minutes be circulated?

How will the agendas and meeting minutes be made public?

***Decision Making***

How will decisions be made in the Steering Group?

How will you ensure the process is transparent?

How will you feed back to the parish or town council?

***Finance***

Set out the budgetary responsibilities that the Steering Group will have.

How will receipts and payments be processed?

Which member/s of the Steering Group will be responsible for managing the finances?

***Conduct and Conflicts of Interest***

You should introduce a code of conduct for the steering group. We advise that the steering group adopt the code of conduct in place at the parish council. At this point you can set out where to find the parish council code of conduct.

The parish council is bound by the Localism Act to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. Introducing a code of conduct for the Steering Group makes clear how the Steering Group should act and deliver the neighbourhood plan. You should start with the Nolan Principles, which have statutory effect in s28(1) of the Localism Act 2011. They are:

* *Selflessness;*
* *Integrity;*
* *Objectivity;*
* *Accountability;*
* *Openness;*
* *Honesty; and*
* *Leadership*.

You should also set out how conflicts of interests will be dealt with by the Steering Group.

This would normally involve identifying the conflict of interest and the person or persons affected and taking steps to ensure they are not involved in discussion or votes on the subject of the conflict.

***Data Protection***

Set out the responsibilities in relation to meeting the Data Protection Act. This should be prepared in liaison with the town or parish council. Please note that the District Council cannot advise town or parish councils on freedom of information requests.

***Steering Group Review***

Set out the circumstances which might trigger a review of the tasks delegated to the Steering Group or a review of the Terms of Reference.