



FOCUS GROUPS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The purpose of each Focus Group is to assist the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee in the preparation of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan. Focus Groups will address a particular aspect of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area and assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and contribute to a strategic vision for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Each Focus Group should:

1. Take its lead from the Steering Committee
2. Understand the purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan, Steering Committee and Focus Groups
3. Appoint a Chairperson. If the Chairperson is absent then members shall elect a temporary Chairperson from amongst those present at the meeting. The Chairperson shall automatically become a member of the Steering Committee.
4. Be open and transparent in the work of the Focus Group and accept that all meetings and matters raised shall be made available in the public domain.
5. Each Focus Group should organise its own meetings, make its own schedule of work, provide summary reports to the Steering Committee in time for consideration at Steering Committee meetings.
6. Each Focus Group shall seek approval for any expenditure from the Steering Committee. Receipted expenses for reimbursement should be presented to the Clerk of the Steering Committee as soon as possible, with reasons for the expenditure clearly given.
7. Focus Groups must be able to demonstrate that any priorities or projects that it identifies have the support of the local community (including residents, businesses, community groups, young people, older persons etc as appropriate) and show that they have discussed the issues with all those relevant parties who will be affected either positively or negatively or could be involved in carrying out the action.
8. Upon completion of its work each Focus Group should produce a short report setting out:
 - a. Introduction and purpose of the Group
 - b. Evidence gathered/work undertaken
 - c. Methods of community engagement used
 - d. General recommendation on future development
 - e. List of documents, bodies, groups, individuals etc consulted
 - f. Conclusion

9. Membership of Focus Groups is not limited and is open to residents living in the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area and any professionals or other individual considered beneficial to the Focus Group. A summary of the credentials of non-resident members should be provided to and approved by the Steering Group.

These Terms of Reference were approved by the Ashington Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee on

Focus Groups:

Five Focus Groups are suggested – economy, infrastructure, transport, housing and environment. The groups are consistent with HDC’s Local Plan. These groups should investigate all primary and secondary sources of information to inform production of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan. The key topics of the Focus Groups are:

Economy

Employment types, locations, Retail, Businesses, Tourism sites & locations

Transport

Public transport, buses, community bus, parking, cycling, cycle paths, footpaths, rights of way

Environment

Built environment, Natural environment, open spaces, conservation areas, allotments, community gardens, ecology, heritage, Listed Buildings, buildings of historic significance

Infrastructure

Community Facilities, Community assets, existing facilities, village centres, health, education, roads, utilities, broadband, social, leisure, sport

Housing

Numbers, mix, design, permitted sites, new sites, land banks, room sizes, affordable, scale, phasing

Focus Group Brief:

1. Elect a Chair – the Chair will be responsible for ensuring that the Focus Group stays within its remit, completes its tasks on schedule and for reporting back to the Steering Committee.
2. Complete a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis on their area of focus on Ashington Parish as it is today. The SWOT analysis should be presented in a grid:

Strengths (High, Medium, Low)	Weaknesses (H, M, L)
Opportunities (H, M, L)	Threats (H, M, L)

--	--

3. Draft out a section of a Residents Survey concerning the Focus Group topic they are working on. Provide the Steering Committee with a draft for incorporation into a comprehensive Survey.
4. Complete a Vision Statement – of where members want Ashington parish to be in 2035. The vision statement should be consistent with the Vision statements in HDC's Strategic Development Plan. This should draw on information received from the Residents Survey.
5. Identify areas where Neighbourhood Plan policies are required to ensure that Ashington Parish progresses from where it is now to where it wants to be according to the Vision statement. Policies need not be incredibly detailed and can be general eg approximate housing numbers, school provision, other facilities desired etc. Policy areas may overlap with other Focus Groups and it is the role of the Steering Committee to bring all Focus Group information together into one coherent Neighbourhood Plan.
6. Produce a Communications Strategy – who should receive communications, how, frequency, who is responsible for their production and what information is expected back from the communication.
7. Produce a Final Report to the Steering Committee – Word document containing:
 - a. Focus Group name and the areas covered
 - b. Name of Focus Group members
 - c. SWOT analysis
 - d. Vision Statement
 - e. Policy areas
 - f. Communications strategy
 - g. Details of stakeholder engagement including dates, numbers attending, communications issued, results of engagement
 - h. Other supporting information or information of relevance