



STEERING COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Name

The name of the organisation shall be the Ashington Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, hereafter referred to as the Committee. The Committee shall be dissolved when the Neighbourhood Plan has been approved by a community referendum and has become part of the statutory development plan for the area.

Purpose

The purpose of the Community-led Committee is to work in partnership with Ashington Parish Council, and any other individual/group deemed appropriate, to develop and oversee a process that will result in the preparation of a draft Neighbourhood Plan for the whole of Ashington Parish. The draft Neighbourhood Plan shall be so well researched and consulted upon that it is consistent with Horsham District Council's (HDC) emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) and passes the four formal stages of acceptance, namely:

- endorsed by Ashington Parish Council;
- accepted by HDC as conforming to its LDF and to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- approved by the independent examiner appointed by HDC as meeting the basic conditions and other legal requirements and recommended for community referendum; and
- approved by the residents of Ashington Parish in a successful community referendum.

How

The Steering Committee will carry out the following tasks (list not exhaustive):

1. To set up Focus Groups to undertake research and gather evidence that will underpin and support the Neighbourhood Plan and to supply terms of reference for those Focus Groups. Each Focus Group will appoint a Chair. Focus Groups do not have the authority to approve expenditure on behalf of the Steering Committee. The Focus Groups could include, but may not be limited to:
 - economy/business;
 - planning/infrastructure;
 - transport/access
 - community facilities and
 - environment/heritage/local issues

The main aims of these Focus Groups will be to:

- record the current features of Ashington Parish in terms of, for example – population, age profile, housing types, commercial activities, farming, leisure and social amenities etc.
 - record peoples’ aspirations for Ashington Parish for the future by appropriate means, for example: by surveys/questionnaires, public meetings, opportunities at public events etc.
 - recommend potential proposals that might reasonably be included in the Neighbourhood Plan
2. Identify ways of involving the whole community including gathering the views and opinions of residents, groups, organisations and businesses.
 3. Identify sources of grant funding
 4. Liaise with the relevant authorities and organisations to make the Plan as robust as possible
 5. Determine the type and content of information required and recommend the appropriate means of gathering the information eg surveys
 6. Report progress to Ashington Parish Council and keep it informed of issues arising, outcomes, successes etc.

Membership of the Steering Committee

The membership of the Committee should reflect the overarching aim to produce a community-led Neighbourhood Plan by being representative of residents, organisations and businesses within the whole of Ashington Parish.

The Committee shall comprise of up to 12 voting members including:

- The Chairman of each Focus Group (currently envisaged as five); and
- no more than 50% who are Parish Councillors.

In addition there may be up to three non-voting advisory members, making a maximum of 15 members, for example Officers of HDC, District Councillors or consultants appointed to assist with the Neighbourhood Plan.

A person shall cease to be a member of the Committee by notifying the Chair or Clerk of his or her resignation. The Committee may advertise for a replacement member.

Officers of the Steering Committee

The Committee shall appoint the following officers:

- Chair
- Vice-chair
- Clerk (who shall be responsible for approving any expenditure with Ashington Parish Council)
- Publicity officer

Meetings

- The Committee shall meet on a regular basis and as necessary to ensure the preparation of the Plan proceeds expeditiously.
- At least five clear days’ notice of meetings shall be given to members by written notice or email. The notice shall include the agenda for the meeting.
- The Committee may agree to invite any individual or organisation to attend a meeting to provide advice.
- Meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public and the public shall be given an opportunity to raise issues and ask questions during the meeting. The meetings will be advertised on noticeboards, website, social media and

other appropriate means. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a time limit of 15 minutes will be available for the public to raise issues and ask questions.

- The quorum for the Committee shall be five voting members.
- Every matter requiring decision shall be determined by a simple majority of votes of the voting Committee members present. In case of equality of votes, the Chair shall have a casting vote.
- The Clerk shall take minutes of the meeting, circulate them to members as soon as possible after each meeting and keep them in a minutes folder. Minutes shall be posted on Ashington Parish Council's website as soon as practical after they have been agreed by the Committee

Conflicts of interest and conduct

- All Committee members shall be expected to declare any conflicts of interest. These shall be recorded in the minutes by the Clerk and the Chair shall ensure that no member with a conflict of interest takes part in the relevant discussion, decision making or voting.
- All Committee members shall work with mutual trust, respect and courtesy combining together to achieve the production of the Neighbourhood Plan

Finance

- The Clerk shall keep a clear record of grants received as advised by the Parish Clerk and of expenditure incurred supported by receipted invoices. The Clerk shall supply those invoices and expense sheets, once approved by the Committee, to the Parish Clerk for record keeping
- The Clerk shall draw up and agree with the Committee procedures for members of the Committee and Focus Groups who wish to claim expenses incurred during the process of producing the Plan and the rates they may claim.
- The Clerk shall report to the Committee at each meeting and Ashington Parish Council on planned and actual expenditure for the project, and liaise with the Parish Clerk to facilitate payment of invoices.

Changes to the terms of reference

- These terms of reference may be amended by agreement of a simple majority of the voting Committee members present.
- Any amendment involving additional expenditure must also be approved by Ashington Parish Council

Dissolution of the Committee

- Upon dissolution of the Committee any remaining funds shall be disposed of by the Committee, in accordance with the decisions reached at an Extraordinary Meeting open to the public called for that purpose. No individual member of the Committee shall benefit from the dispersal.
- The return of any unused funding given as grants to the Committee may need to be considered if this was part of the condition of the grant.

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