

# **BEARLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1. Introduction**

Bearley Parish Council took the decision on 6 May 2014 to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council is the responsible body for the Neighbourhood Plan. However, in order to progress the plan and engage local residents<sup>1</sup> to ensure it is a community-led plan, the Parish Council seeks to establish a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. This is an advisory group, with final decisions being made by the Parish Council.

The Steering Group, and Parish Council, will work to following Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR shall be published on the Bearley Village website and copies shall be made available on request to the Steering Group or Parish Council. Any changes to the ToR shall be drafted by the Steering Group for approval of the Parish Council.

### **2. Roles and responsibilities – Steering Group**

Key tasks of the Steering Group are to:

- a) Monitor preparation of development plan documents by Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) (i.e. Core Strategy and Site Allocations documents), drafting representations as appropriate/necessary for approval and submission by the Parish Council.
- b) Investigate and identify support for a Neighbourhood Plan.
- c) Consider the scope and aims of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- d) Propose and monitor a project programme for delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- e) Liaise with relevant organisations and stakeholders, including SDC.
- f) Engage the local community to gather views and consult on emerging policies.
- g) Draft the Neighbourhood Plan, with particular regard to future land use and development.
- h) Arrange meetings and appoint Working Groups, as appropriate/necessary to progress preparation the Neighbourhood Plan.
- i) Ensure supporting documents are drafted, such as the basic conditions report.
- j) Draft representations to any planning applications within the Parish that may have implications for the Neighbourhood Plan for approval and submission by the Parish Council.
- k) Regularly report to the Parish Council on progress, informing of any potential changes in programme or budget requirements.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities – Parish Council**

The Parish Council will:

- a) Ensure links between the Parish Council and Steering Group are maintained through a standing Neighbourhood Planning item on the Parish Council agenda whereby the Steering Group can report on progress and receive on-going endorsement via a Parish Council minute.

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<sup>1</sup> A local resident is defined as an individual that resides within the Parish but is not a Parish Councillor.

- b) Minute all Parish Council decisions in relation to the Steering Group and Neighbourhood Plan and make these publically accessible in a timely manner through the Bearley Village website and Bearley Beacon.
- c) Hold budget responsibility (see 6 below).
- d) Support the Steering Group throughout the process providing sufficient assistance and financial resources to ensure the plan is prepared in accordance with the project programme and that overall expenditure falls within the budget set by the Parish Council. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Facilitating an open and transparent process by advertising/publishing all Steering Group meetings, agendas and minutes on the Bearley village website and in the Bearley Beacon.
  - Supporting Steering Group efforts to engage and consult with the local community throughout the process.
  - Appointing any relevant external expertise to assist the process identified as necessary by the Steering Group and approved by the Parish Council.
- e) Carry out all statutory duties for which the Parish Council are responsible, including submission of the draft Neighbourhood Plan to SDC for inspection and independent examination.
- f) Ensure appropriate insurance is in place for all Steering Group activities.

#### **4. Membership of the Steering Group**

- a) The Steering Group will be formed primarily from local residents. Parish Councillors may also be members of the Steering Group. Membership may also be open to other interested parties, such as local businesses based within the Parish.
- b) Members of the Steering Group will declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to any decisions or recommendations made by the Steering Group, such as ownership of potential development land. Any member deemed to have a conflict of interest shall not be eligible to vote in any decisions taken by the Steering Group and shall not hold position of Chair.

#### **5. Chair / Secretary**

- a) At the first meeting the Steering Group shall elect a Chair. The Chair shall:
  - Run the Steering Group meetings, including preparation of a draft agenda. If the Chair is not present at a meeting the Steering Group shall elect a temporary Chair from amongst members present.
  - Act as the link between the Steering Group and Parish Council.
- b) At the first meeting the Steering Group shall elect a Secretary. The Secretary shall:
  - Co-ordinate the work of the Steering Group.
  - Take minutes of all meetings, noting, amongst other things, decisions taken and actions with responsible persons and indicative timescales. If the Secretary is not present at a meeting the Steering Group shall elect a temporary Secretary from amongst members present.

- Circulate minutes in a timely manner to all Steering Group members and, following agreement of the Steering Group members present at the meeting, the Parish Council for publication in accordance with 3(d) above.

## **5. Frequency, Timing and Procedure of Meetings**

- a) The Steering Group will as a minimum meet every two months.
- b) Meetings shall normally be held at 7.30pm at an appropriate venue such as the Village Hall.
- c) All Steering Group meetings shall be open and may be attended by local residents and other interested parties to observe or participate in the proceedings.
- d) Steering Group members shall be informed of meetings and the draft agenda 14 days prior to the meeting by email, unless an alternative communication method is agreed with individual members.
- e) Public notice of meetings, together with a draft agenda, shall be made 14 days prior to the meeting through the Bearley Village website and noticeboards and, subject to publication timing, the Bearley Beacon.
- f) A rolling schedule of meetings will be set in place following preparation of a project programme and made publically available via the Bearley Village website and noticeboards.
- g) The Steering Group will be deemed to be quorate if (i) a minimum of 5 members that are eligible to vote are present; and (ii) of those eligible to vote at least half are local residents. If inquorate, meetings may proceed but any decisions will require future ratification by the Steering Group when a quorum can gather.
- h) Any decisions taken by the Steering Group will be carried forward if more than 50% of members voting are in favour. The Chair will have the casting vote in instances where there is no majority.
- i) All decisions will be advisory only and require endorsement of the Parish Council.

## **6. Finance**

- a) The budget will be set by the Parish Council.
- b) All grants and funding will applied for and held by the Parish Council who will ring fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan purposes only.
- c) Accounts related to the Neighbourhood Plan shall be open to the Steering Group and wider public.
- d) The Steering Group shall report planned expenditure to the Parish Council and the Parish Council shall regularly review and update the budget.
- e) Costs should normally be incurred directly by the Parish Council, for example, hire of the village hall or appointment of external expertise.
- f) If expenditure is to be incurred by any Steering Group member and claimed back from the Parish Council, for example for postage, this shall be agreed in advance and supported by receipts.

## **7. Working Groups**

- a) The Steering Group may form Working Groups to undertake various aspects of the work involved in producing the Neighbourhood Plan, such as public consultation.
- b) Each Working Group shall work to ToR drafted by the Steering Group and approved by the Parish Council.
- c) Each Working Group shall have a lead person to organise the work of the Working Group and regularly report to the Steering Group including through a standing item on the Steering Group agenda.
- d) Membership and purpose of each Working Group will be regularly reviewed by the Steering Group.

## **8. Dissolving the Steering Group**

- a) If the Steering Group wishes to dissolve before the conclusion of the Neighbourhood Plan project it must notify the Parish Council in writing.
- b) At the conclusion of the Neighbourhood Plan project the Parish Council and Steering Group shall discuss the future working, if any, of the Steering Group.