

SANDON PARISH COUNCIL

Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference



1. Introduction

Sandon Parish Council took the decision to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan following the Government's publication in 2011 of its Localism Act. In order to produce this plan the Parish Council will establish a Steering Group to oversee a process that will result in the preparation of a draft Plan which will be put to a public referendum. In doing so it is deemed appropriate that the Steering Group are provided with and accept the following terms of reference.

The plan will seek to:

- Identify all the important aspects of life in the parish for which plans for the future are needed, with particular regard to land use; and
- Bring forward proposals which will enhance the quality of life in the parish in the years to come.

2. Membership of the Steering Group

i. The Steering Group will be formed primarily from local volunteers who reside or work in the parish. Elected members or officers of the Parish Council may also be members of the Steering Group.

ii. The Steering Group will aim for a maximum membership of 12 persons.

iii. The Steering Group may form Working Groups or sub-committees to undertake various aspects of the work involved in producing the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

iv. The Steering Group will be supported by officers of Chelmsford City Council. The Local Planning Authority are obliged to provide assistance under the statutory provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Group

The local representatives who are members of the Steering Group will:

- Promote the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Development Plan and be encouraged to participate and provide their views and opinions on the specific topics which are covered during the preparation of the Plan.
- Arrange meetings and appoint sub-groups to gather views and consult on emerging policies which are considered appropriate for incorporation in the draft Plan.
- Assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the neighbourhood area.
- Liaise with relevant organisations and stakeholders to secure their input in the process.
- Analyse the results of questionnaires or other evidence received during the planning process and use them to prepare a robust draft Plan.
- Inform the Parish Council of progress on a regular basis in order that Steering or Working

Group Minutes can be noted.

- Support the Local Planning Authority and Parish Council during the referendum process.

The Parish Council will:

- Support the Steering Group throughout the process providing sufficient assistance and financial resources to ensure the plan is prepared expeditiously providing that overall expenditure falls within the budget allocated by the Parish Council.
- Support the Steering Group to ensure the Plan conforms to national and local policy, and is sound and robust enough to withstand independent examination. Outside professional expertise and aid may be sought to ensure this objective is met.
- Work with the Steering Group and the local community to establish that future infrastructure needs of the parish are provided prior to any housing or other development forthcoming as a result of the Core Strategy and Local Development Framework occurring within the Parish.
- Work with the Steering Group to develop policies to guide the future development and use of land in the area.
- Support the Steering Group in developing sustainability appraisal or other assessments requested by the Local Planning Authority prior to the Plan being submitted.
- Support the Steering Group in efforts of engagement and consultation with the local community throughout the plan making process.
- Facilitate any required contact with the relevant statutory bodies or parties who must be consulted during the plan making process.
- Carry out all statutory duties contained in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) regulations 2012 and engage with Chelmsford City Council during the referendum process of the plan for which the principle authority are responsible.
- Following the preparation of the draft Plan and with the agreement from the Group, submit the plan to the Local Planning Authority for inspection and independent examination.
- Provide appropriate budgetary support, not outlined above, for the production and local promotion of the Plan within the budget allocated by the Council.

All 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 group. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of interest in land (directly or indirectly) or a business or indeed any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Steering Group.
 - Ensure that there is no discrimination in the plan making process and that it is a wholly inclusive, open and transparent process to all groups in the neighbourhood area, to anyone wishing to undertake development in the neighbourhood area, or to anyone wanting to be involved in the plan making process.
 - Work together for the benefit of the communities within the neighbourhood area.
 - Treat other Members of the Group with respect and dignity, allowing Members to express their views without prejudice and interruption.
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- The group will be deemed to be quorate if a minimum of 3 lay members and 2 Parish Council members are in attendance. If inquorate, meetings may proceed but any decisions taken may be advisory only and require future ratification by the group when a quorum can

gather.

- Any decisions taken by the Steering Group, other than those delegated to appointed officers, will be carried forward if the majority (more than 50%) are in favour. For voting purposes, the Group must be quorate. The Chair will have the casting vote in instances where there is no majority.
- All decisions taken by the Steering Group are subject to ratification by the full Parish Council.

4. Officers of the Steering Group

- The Group shall elect a Chairman and Deputy Chairman from their number.
- If the Chairman is not present, the Deputy Chairman shall take the meeting. If neither is present, members shall elect a Chairman for the meeting from amongst their number.
- The group will also appoint a secretary to be responsible for co-ordinating the work of the steering group and any sub groups established.

5. Frequency, Timing and Procedure of Meetings

- The Steering Group will usually meet bi monthly, scheduled to take place prior to Parish Council meetings; although sub groups may meet more frequently as necessary.
- All meetings shall be open and may be attended by residents or those who work in the area identified for the plan to observe or participate in the proceedings.
- The Steering Group shall keep Minutes of meetings which will be open to public scrutiny. These will be publicised on the parish web site and originals kept in the parish council office for inspection when required.
- Notices, Agenda, Minutes and associated papers shall normally be despatched to Steering Group members by email unless otherwise specified or agreed.
- Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with set procedure to be determined and agreed by the Steering Group.
- The Steering Group will regularly update and report its progress to the Clerk of the Parish Council ensuring that he is aware of the on-going budgetary implications associated with the project.
- The Steering Group will report back to the full Parish Council at each Council meeting where Neighbourhood Planning will be a standing agenda item.
- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed throughout the project and amended as required. Any changes to Steering Group Terms of Reference shall require Parish Council agreement.