

Steypning Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

a. The main purpose of the Steering Group committee is to oversee the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Steypning which will progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimately be adopted by Horsham District Council to become local planning policy. As part of this work the Steering Group will review and update where necessary the work co-ordinated by the Steypning, Wiston, Ashurst and Bramber (SWAB) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which relates to Steypning.

b. The Steering Group committee will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of the informed ambitions of the majority of Steypning residents. The Group will maximise support for the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Plan by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process.

2. Principles

a. That the Steering Group committee will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all members of the community

b. All decisions made shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to achieve this, the Steering Group committee will carry out the following

- Be accountable for steering and providing strategic management of the Neighbourhood Plan for Steypning;
- Produce, monitor and update a project timetable;
- Produce a consultation and engagement strategy, showing how the public will be involved throughout the process;
- Regularly report back to the Parish Council and, where specified in these terms of reference, seek endorsement of decisions taken;
- Undertake analysis and evidence gathering to support the plan production process;
- Engage with external consultants to seek expert guidance, as required
- Identify sources of funding and seek to maximise funding from external sources; and manage the Neighbourhood Plan budget
- Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible;
- Gather data from a wide range of sources to ensure that the conclusions reached are fully evidenced and that the aspirations and issues of residents are understood;

- Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final NP is supported by the majority of residents

4. Membership

a. Membership of the Steering Group committee will consist of at least two Steyning Parish Councillors and between six and eight residents of the local community. Steering Group committee membership will aim to include a wide representation of those who live and/or work within the 'Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area', selected through a fair and transparent process.

- All members of the Steering Group committee should promote the purposes and principles of the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group committee.

5. Delegated Authority

a. The Steering Group committee has full delegated authority from the Parish Council to deliver its plan- making functions up to publication of the Pre-Submission document. The Group will report monthly to the Parish Council setting out progress on its work.

b. Steyning Parish Council will be responsible for these Terms of Reference and any subsequent changes to them, and for an annual budget forecast and for any necessary expenditure in excess of grant funding. Steyning Parish Council will be asked to approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.

b. The plan-making process remains the responsibility of the Parish Council as the qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken on behalf of the Parish Council, with appropriate recognition of the Parish Council's position as the qualifying body given in all communications associated with the project. The Parish Council has the authority to dissolve the Steering Group committee or to end work on the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Meetings

a. Steering Group committee meetings will take place approximately once a month, but at least once within every two months.

b. Where possible, all meetings should be held within the Parish. The location and dates of future meetings will be made publicly available via the Parish Council website.

c. Meetings will be open to the general public, but the Steering Group committee may vote to enter into Confidential Session when discussing matters of commercial sensitivity or to protect personal information. The participation in the meeting of any members of the public will be regulated by the Chair or Vice-Chair.

d. The Steering Group committee will elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary from its membership to remain in those positions until the project is completed. If these positions should become vacant, the Group will elect an alternate.

d. The Secretary shall keep a record of meetings and circulate minutes to Steering Group committee members and the Parish Council in a timely fashion. Minutes shall be made publicly available on the Parish Council website.

e. At least three clear days' notice of meetings shall be sent to members via email.

- f. Decisions made by the Steering Group committee will be made by majority vote. Each member shall have one vote. A minimum of half the current steering group membership shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. The Chair shall have one casting vote in any case of an equality of votes.
- g. The steering group committee has the responsibility to engage with the local community. Decisions to invite/engage with representatives from the local community to address steering group meetings will be decided upon at steering group committee meetings and will be at the discretion of the chairperson.
- h. Consultants, community representatives and persons attending steering group committee meetings will not have the right to vote. Their participation in the meeting will be regulated by the Chair or Vice-Chair.

7. Working Groups

- a. The Steering Group committee may establish working groups, made up of volunteers from the community to aid them in any Neighbourhood Plan related work.
- b. Each working group should have a lead person from the Steering Group committee.
- c. Each working group will have a membership of up to 15 people. If working groups are over-subscribed, members will be selected by the Steering Group committee according to their ability to contribute in that topic area.
- d. Working Groups will make written reports to the Steering Group committee on their activities as requested but will not have to publish minutes of meetings. The Steering Group committee will consider and approve the reports from the Working Groups and oversee their activities.
- e. Working Group meetings will not be open to the public. However they may invite/engage with representatives from the local community or subject matter experts to address group meetings, at the discretion of the Chair.

8. Finance

- a. All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan work.
- b. The Steering Group committee has authority to spend on project matters within their approved budget forecast and the Treasurer will update the Steering Group at each meeting on project finance.
- c. Steering Group committee members and volunteers from any working groups may claim back any expenditure incurred during any Neighbourhood Plan related work provided that expenditure is pre-approved by the Steering Group and follows the Steyning Parish Council authorised expenditure processes.

9. Conduct

- a. A register of all members of the Steering Group committee and any Working Groups' pecuniary and other relevant interests will be kept and will be held by the Secretary for the

duration of the plan process, and must be updated where necessary. These will be available for inspection by any resident of the parish on request.

b. Any member of the Steering Group committee or Working Groups who has a pecuniary interest in any agenda item must declare that interest at the beginning of the meeting, and where there is a pecuniary interest of any prejudicial conflict interest affecting a member, that member shall withdraw from the meeting while that agenda item is discussed and shall not participate in any vote on that matter.

c. Members of the Steering Group committee and Working Groups will apply the following principles:

- Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion and belief;
- Actively promote equality of access and opportunity;
- Respect the confidentiality of commercially sensitive or personal information that they gain as part of their membership.

d. The Chair of any meeting of the Steering Group committee or Working Group will enforce the Terms of Reference, if necessary by requiring a member to leave the meeting. If any member repeatedly does not adhere to the Terms of Reference the Steering Group may vote for them to be removed from the Steering Group committee or Working Group.

10. Changes to the Terms of Reference

This constitution may be amended with the support of at least six of the current members at a Steering Group committee Meeting and with the approval of the parish council.