

Terms of Reference for the Fairford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Group

Relationship between the Steering Group and the Town Council as the qualifying body

Fairford Town Council (“the Town Council”) is the qualifying body for the preparation of the Fairford Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group (“the Steering Group”) will officially report to the Town Council through their representatives on the Steering Group, with occasional reports to the Town Council from non Town Council representatives.

The Town Council will receive reports at each step of the process and will approve the Submission Draft of the NDP prior to publication for consultation and submission to the local authority for independent examination.

The Town Council will retain accountability and control of the budget and requests will be made via the Town Council representatives on the Steering Group.

Purpose of the Fairford Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group The purpose of the Steering Group is to oversee and co-ordinate the production of a sound Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) covering the Town of Fairford in the Cotswold District, as identified in the designated neighbourhood area, working with members of the community and the Town Council to achieve this aim.

The NDP will define the planning policy priorities identified by the community taking into account all representations made during the plan-making process and having regard to all relevant existing plans and evidence. The Plan will include or be supported by an audit trail of evidence and an appropriate delivery plan setting out, where relevant, the means by which these policy priorities may be implemented.

In order to carry out this purpose, the Steering Group will have the power to:

- Develop a timetable and strategy for undertaking the NDP
- Develop aims and objectives for the NDP
- Make recommendations regarding use of the NDP budget
- Decide how secretariat and other roles will be carried out
- Initiate, co-ordinate and organise community consultation activities
- Gather additional evidence about the geographical area covered by the NDP and evidence to test proposed solutions and policies
- Use evidence collected, including that from consultations, to prioritise and develop a NDP
- Oversee the drafting and finalising of the NDP
- Co-opt additional members onto the Steering Group for specified functions and/or periods
- Form or create theme groups or sub groups to undertake specific tasks
- Make additional rules to help run the Steering Group.

Membership and responsible persons

- There will be at least 6 and no more than 8 members of the Steering Group with 2 representatives from the Town Council and representation from residents and key organisations in the Town. No more than one third of the Steering Group members will be Town Councillors. At least 4 members of the Steering Group must be present for decisions to be made. Interim decisions may be made by members via email or telephone communications provided that an appropriate written record is kept.
- The role of Chairman of the Steering Group will be shared between two persons.
- The role of the Chairman will be to oversee and chair meetings defining agenda and ensuring actions are followed up as necessary. The Chairman will also ensure that members’ potential conflicts of interest are recognised and measures taken to address them, especially during meetings.
- People who wish to be involved in the Neighbourhood Plan but do not wish to become Steering Group members will be welcome to attend Steering Group meetings. They will effectively form a wider advisory group and means of communicating with others in the Town but only Steering Group members will have a vote at such meetings.

- Role sharing of Steering Group membership will be considered. However, both individuals sharing a role will agree to the Terms of Reference and the one vote will be shared. The 2 individuals will be expected to keep each other informed of Steering Group progress and agree who will attend each meeting as continuity will be vital.

Meetings

- Meetings will take place regularly during the process of undertaking the NDP, initially fortnightly, at times to suit the members of the Steering Group.
- Adequate notice of meetings will be provided and agenda and associated papers will normally be despatched by email at least 3 clear days before the meeting
- Minutes will be kept of meetings and made available to Town Council and other interested parties, in draft form prior to approval at the subsequent Steering Group meeting.
- An ongoing audit trail of consultation and other evidence gathering work will be kept and made available to Town Council and other interested parties.
- If members of the Steering Group have a conflict of interest (including any financial interest) they must declare it at the earliest opportunity and they will not be allowed to vote in relation to the relevant matter.
- The Steering Group may form or create sub groups or theme groups to undertake specific tasks. There must be effective communications flow between sub groups and the Steering Group.
- Members will aim to make Steering Group decisions by consensus. However should a vote be required each member will have one vote and a simple majority will be required to support any motion. The chairman of the meeting will have one casting vote. Show of hands will suffice for voting but names can be recorded if required by any Steering Group member present.
- Where there is no specific provision in these terms of reference the law and custom of Town Council meetings will apply.

Code of conduct

All members of the Steering Group recognise that, while they may represent a particular group in the community, their role is to move forward the NDP in a way that benefits the whole community. Members of the Steering Group will recognise and declare any potential conflicts of interest.

The Steering Group accepts the following principles:

- A Steering Group which is open and transparent and welcomes participation by others
- Active participation by all members of the Steering Group
- An inclusive consultation and plan making process
- Robust evidence gathering
- Actions based on evidence of consultation
- The NDP should take due regard of the emerging Cotswold District Council Local Plan and have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework
- Steering Group members also accept the Nolan principles in conducting their role (as recommended by the Committee of Standards in Public Life 1995). See Appendix 1

Changes to the Terms of Reference

Amendments to these Terms of Reference may be made at a Steering Group meeting subject to agreement by the majority of the Steering Group members and with prior notification of proposals to the Fairford Town Council.

Dissolution of the Steering Group

The Steering Group may agree to call a special meeting for the purpose of dissolving or considering dissolving the Steering Group.

Upon dissolution of the Steering Group any remaining funds shall be used to fund projects set out in the Fairford Neighbourhood Development Plan for the benefit of the community. No individual member of the group shall benefit from the dispersal.

These Terms of Reference were adopted at a Fairford Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group meeting in July 2015.

Appendix 1

Nolan principles

Selflessness: Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.