



## **ETCHINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **Steering Committee Terms of Reference**

#### **Declaration of Interests**

March 2017

**Aim of the Group:**

The Neighbourhood Development Plan is being prepared for Etchingham Parish in full consultation with the local community (described hereafter as the Plan). Etchingham Parish Council is the qualifying body for the preparation of the Plan and the Steering Committee (SC) is a working group of the Parish Council and will therefore report regularly to the Parish Council.

The Plan will be developed under the terms of the Localism Act 2011 including The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations which will provide a legal basis for residents to represent the future of their community.

The main purpose of the Steering Committee is to oversee the preparation of the Plan in order that it will then progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimately be made by Rother District Council (RDC).

The Steering Committee will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of the aspirations of the parish. The Group will gain support for the Neighbourhood Plan by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process.

**Objectives of the Plan:**

- a. Define and seek agreement of the area it covers.
- b. Set out the vision, objectives, policies and proposals for future development within the defined area.
- c. Ensure that a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues are taken into consideration.
- d. Ensure it forms a clear and binding basis for any future development of housing (including 'affordable' housing and houses for the elderly if needed).
- e. Ensure it supports existing and prospective businesses and jobs in the community.
- f. Provide an appropriate vision of supporting roads and transport needs.
- g. Ensure that the environmental needs including water control, flood avoidance and sewage disposal are appropriate to the plan.
- h. Consider new and innovative ways of conserving/providing energy not least with any building proposals to meet the plan.
- i. Ensure that modern communications (broadband, telephone, satellite) with a capacity to keep up with technological developments, are provided to the whole community.
- j. Protect or provide open spaces for recreation.
- k. Protect existing sites of outstanding natural beauty, conservation areas and the overall character of the area.

**It is important to note that this list does not necessarily mean that there will be policies on the issues outlined.**

## **Key tasks:**

- a. Determine the overall scope and objectives of the Plan.
- b. Provide strategic management of the preparation of the Plan, ensuring that key milestones are achieved, and that an appropriate delivery plan to implement the Plan is produced.
- c. Determine a communication and engagement strategy so that as many members of the community as possible may be involved. Set a target date for referendum and delivery of the final Plan.
- d. Agree on responsibilities within the group and consider whether any sub working groups need to be formed to address specific activities.
- e. Agree a programme of wide consultation with relevant statutory bodies as required.
- f. Gather all necessary evidence, including commissioning such work to support the evidence base for the Plan.
- g. Be accountable to the Parish Council for budgeting and controlling expenditure necessitated by the preparation and delivery of the Plan.
- h. Set goals for interim and final reports.
- i. Set goal for open community consultation of draft plan before submission to the two councils for validation.
- j. Revise Draft following internal and external review.
- k. Seek Independent Examination.
- l. Following any actions from h. and i. above to produce the final Plan for approval by Councils ahead of the Referendum.
- m. Facilitate the timing and process for the Referendum.
- n. Keep under review the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets all requirements.
- o. Do such other tasks as are necessary to facilitate the rapid preparation of the Plan.

## **Communications**

Communications outside of meetings will be conducted primarily by Email, copying all members wherever possible. Notices to the community will be through local web sites, shops, newsletter and in accordance with the communication strategy document.

## **Membership**

The Steering Committee will be made up of a cross-section of volunteers from the community, including Parish Councillors. The aim will be to also seek representation from under-represented sections and hard to reach groups of the community.

The Steering Committee will oversee the setting up of thematic groups whose task will be to prepare and feed into the Steering Committee the evidence necessary for the sound preparation of the Plan.

## **Working Groups**

The Steering Committee may establish working groups, made up of volunteers from the community to help develop any part (s) of the Plan. Each working group should have a lead person from the Steering Committee and this should be agreed by the Steering Committee.

Members of the community will be encouraged to participate in the process at all stages.

Record of the groups' activities should be kept including minutes of meetings (both closed and in open forum).

### **Standards and Declaration of Interests**

All members of the SC must recognise that their role is to help develop the Plan in a way that benefits the whole community.

- Members of the SC must agree to follow the Seven Principles of Public Life upheld by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see Appendix 1)
- Members of the SC will be encouraged to complete a Declaration of Interests form, (see Appendix 2), which will be held by the Clerk.
- Members of the SC will recognise and declare any conflicts of interest; in situations where interests and roles are in conflict they must be declared before the business is discussed and the member should leave the room for that item.

### **Meetings**

- The SC will meet at least monthly and in addition when members determine that a meeting is needed.
- The Steering Committee will elect a Chairman for the purpose of its meetings.
- A minimum of three SC members must be present to effect decisions.
- The SC will aim to make decisions by consensus. However, should a vote be required, each member will have one vote and a simple majority, by show of hands, will be required. The Chairman will have a casting vote.
- The Steering Committee will elect a Meetings Secretary to ensure that appropriate minutes are kept to be sent to members and the Parish Council in a timely manner (in draft form, until confirmed at the next meeting of the SC).
- As much use as possible is to be made of electronic communications.
- Meetings will be open to the public.

### **Finance**

- The accountable body for the purpose of producing a Neighbourhood Plan will be the Parish Council.
- The SC will provide the Clerk with budgetary information so that all proposed spending on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan is dealt with in an open and transparent manner. Budgets and amended budgets will be presented to the Parish Council for approval.
- All receipts and payments associated with the production of the Plan will be processed through the Parish Council's accounting system.
- Invoices will be made out in the name of the parish council who will pay them in accordance with their Financial Regulations.
- All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the parish council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan purposes only.

### **Governance**

The SC will be governed by the processes of the Parish Council. Seek consensus within the committee on decisions but if agreement cannot be found on specific issues then direction should be sought from the Parish Council or Rother District Council as appropriate. The SC must keep in mind that the outcome (the Plan) is decided finally by a referendum and thus the group must provide facts and implications for draft proposals rather than dictate outcome in a biased way.

The Steering Committee has full delegated authority from the Parish Council to [deliver its plan making functions up to and including publication of the Consultation Draft Plan]. The Group will report [monthly] to the Parish Council setting out progress on its work. The Parish Council will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.

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 by or on behalf of the Parish Council with appropriate recognition of the Parish Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

### **Changes to the Terms of Reference**

This constitution may be amended with the support of at least (two-thirds) of the current membership at a Steering Committee Meeting and with the approval of the Parish Council.

### **Dissolution**

The Steering Committee will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained and/or when at least (two- thirds) of its members and the Parish Council, consider its services are no longer required.

The Steering Committee will then dispose of any remaining funds held in accordance with any conditions imposed by the grant funders and in the best interests of the Parish.

### **Key documents**

The following will be presented to the full Parish Council for approval / ratification:

- Steering Committee Membership List
- Terms of Reference
- Project Timetable
- Draft and amended budgets
- Proposed scope of the Plan
- Drafts of the Plan and the final submission version

**Approved by:**

**Etchingam Parish Council:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **Appendix 1 - Seven Principles of Public Life**

### **1. Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### **2. Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### **3. Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### **4. Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **5. Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **6. Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### **7. Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Appendix 2

### DECLARATION OF INTERESTS FORM ETCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL ("THE Council") Code of Conduct for Members

I, ....., as a member of the Council's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee have set out below my interests including those of my spouse or partner, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

#### Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

Myself	My spouse or partner

#### Contracts

Any contract which is made between me or my spouse or partner (or a body in which I have a beneficial interest) and the Council named above:

- (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
- (b) which has not been fully discharged.

Myself	My spouse or partner

#### Land

Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the Council named above. Beneficial interest could include land or property which you own, or have a right to occupy (e.g. a tenancy) or receive an income from. This will usually include your home address.

Myself	My spouse or partner

#### Licences

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council named above for a month or longer.

Myself	My spouse or partner

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**Corporate tenancies**

Any tenancy where (to my knowledge)—

- (a) the landlord is the Council named above; and
- (b) the tenant is a body in which I or my spouse or partner has a beneficial interest

Myself	My spouse or partner

**Securities**

Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—

(a) that body (to my knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council named above; and

(b) either—

- (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
- (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which I or my spouse or partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

*“securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society*

Myself	My spouse or partner

**Membership of Organisations**

Where the member (of the Council) is a member of, or in a position of general control or management in:

- a) any body to which I have been appointed or nominated by the Council;
- b) any body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g. school governing body or another council);
- c) any body directed to charitable purposes;
- d) any body one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union).

Myself	My spouse or partner



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**Gifts and Hospitality**

Any gift or hospitality which I have received in my capacity as a member of the Steering Group with an estimated value of at least £50

Myself	My spouse or partner

Signed..... Date.....