

Terms of Reference

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Introduction/Background

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is a sub-committee of Swanage Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee and is referred to below as the "Steering Group".

Swanage Town Council (STC) is aiming to produce a Neighbourhood Plan that ensures the growth of our town is both sustainable and achieved within a townscape and environment that protects and enhances the special characteristics of the town as recognised by the Swanage community and which, in turn, attract the visitors who power the town's seaside economy.

1. Purpose and Objective

To ensure the production of a Draft Neighbourhood Plan, which defines the planning 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.

2. Constitutional Arrangements

2.1 The Steering Group is a Sub-Committee of Swanage Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee. As such its governance arrangements must be in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders.

2.2 STC is the qualifying body for the purposes of preparing and financing the Plan. Quarterly reports will be made to the full Council to ensure effective progress, and the Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee will receive copies of the Steering Group minutes to consider any matters arising.

2.3 The Steering Group has full delegated authority to manage the preparation of the Plan as set out in the objectives, and within agreed budgets, up to and including the publication of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for public consultation. STC will approve the final draft Neighbourhood Plan prior to submission to the Local Planning Authority.

2.4 The Steering Group will approve the minutes of its meetings for accuracy.

2.5 The Steering Group must seek approval from its parent committee for any changes to these Terms of Reference.

3. The Steering Group will meet regularly to:

3.1 Determine the overall scope and objectives of the plan based on public feedback;

3.2 Commission and monitor a project plan and report to Swanage Town Council on progress against key objectives;

3.3 Ensure that there is a continued review of the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets all requirements;

3.4 Make recommendations to the Town Council on resourcing the Plan, via the Planning and Consultation Committee;

3.5 Ensure that the wider community is involved in the Plan process;

3.6 Ensure that necessary evidence is gathered to inform each of the themes within the scope of the plan;

3.7 Ensure that all available options are identified and assessed in respect of each theme and reflected in the draft Plan for wider consultation and review;

3.8 Ensure minutes, reports and documents relating to the plan are made publicly accessible;

3.9 Agree a timescale for completion.

4. Task Teams

The Steering Group will oversee the setting up of Task Teams, which will feed evidence back to the Steering Group to support preparation of the Plan. A member of the Steering Group will chair the Task Teams. The initial theme groups are:

- Development Task Team (incorporating Housing and Community Services, Town Centre and Economic Development)
- Environment Task Team (incorporating Environment, Heritage and Conservation)

5. Membership

5.1 Membership of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is as follows:

- a) Six Councillor Members of Swanage Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee, nominated by the Planning and Consultation Committee.
- b) Up to six other members residing in the Parish of Swanage (the Steering Group having delegated authority to co-opt accordingly, dependent on skills and experience).

5.2 The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Steering Group.

5.3 Representatives of O'Neill Homer, Planning Consultants can attend any meeting of the Steering Group, and Theme Groups, as advisors.

6. Meetings

The Steering Group will meet regularly. Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required, in accordance with legislation each Councillor Member shall have one vote, and votes can only be made in person. The quorum is three voting members, although a minimum of five voting members shall be present at Steering Group meetings when a proposal is considered to recommend changes to these Terms of Reference. A simple majority will be required to support any motion. The Chair shall have one casting vote.

Town Council administrative staff will take minutes and organise meetings of the Steering Group and reporting to STC.

7. Conduct and Interests

The Steering Group will follow the Code of Conduct as adopted by Swanage Town Council. Whilst members as individuals may be accountable to their parent organisations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.