



Parish Council Parish-Wide Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms Of Reference

1. Purpose

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been formed by Yalding Parish Council (the Parish Council) to manage the process for and to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the civil parish of Yalding. Whilst the Parish Council is the responsible, qualifying body for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan; the Plan is a document produced and owned by the Community as a whole.

2. Responsibilities

The Steering Group is an advisory body and as such will make recommendations to the Parish Council who will make the final decision. The group will undertake the following, subject to the approval of the Parish Council:

- Prepare and implement a programme for producing the Neighbourhood Plan;
- Work with officers from Maidstone Borough Council to ensure that the Plan conforms to national and local policies;
- Ensure that all members of the community and other relevant bodies are fully involved in the process through community consultation and that all relevant information is published on the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group's website;
- Obtain evidence required to support the policies to be developed for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan;
- Prepare a Sustainability Appraisal and / or Strategic Environmental Assessment and /or Habitats Regulation Assessment if appropriate;
- Prepare a draft Neighbourhood Plan with any revisions following public consultation.

3. Finance

- The Steering Group shall not incur expenditure without prior authority from the Parish Council.
- The Steering Group shall seek to find funding sources.
- All funds will be held in the Parish Council bank account.

4. Membership

- No more than four members of the Parish Council
- A maximum of ten members of the local community as agreed from time to time with the Steering Group and Parish Council.

5. Governance

- It is expected that all Steering Group members will abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct including declarations of interest.
- Members of the Steering Group must be willing to work together for the benefit of their community. They must treat other members with respect and dignity and be prepared to consider views that are different from their own.
- The list of members of the Steering Group and their roles may be found on the Group's website.
- The Steering Group should encourage involvement by members of the community and so membership will be flexible, allowing additional members to be involved as numbers and practical management of the meetings permit.
- The Steering Group may invite other individuals to join working groups or teams to undertake various tasks or projects forming part of the Neighbourhood Plan process. The working groups or teams will report to the Steering Group.
- The Parish Council will be responsible for agreeing the terms of reference and any relevant amendments to them. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.
- Non parish council members must adhere to the same requests for confidentiality as are from time to time made of parish councillors.

6. Declarations of Interest

- Steering Group members must declare an interest where decisions or recommendations could result in potential advantage or disadvantage, whether financial or otherwise, to them, their family or close associates.
- In the interests of transparency and probity, the Secretary of the Parish Clerk will keep a record of declarations of interest which will also be made a public record on The Steering Group's website.

7. Meetings

- The Steering Group will arrange its own meeting schedule.
- Full Steering Group meetings will be informal in nature and will be open to members of the public if they wish to attend.
- The Steering Group may invite individuals or organisations to attend meetings to give advice on any relevant topic.

- A Coordinator for the process who will monitor the work of the various working groups, will be chosen from members the group.
- A Secretary will be appointed from members of the Group who will be responsible for taking minutes and ensuring that all documentation is placed on the Neighbourhood Plan website.
- Minutes of meetings will be recorded and published on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's website.
- Working groups will arrange their own meeting schedules and will keep notes of meetings which will be shared with the Steering Group.

8. Dissolution

- The Steering Group will continue to meet until the Yalding Parish Wide Neighbourhood Plan is completed and has reached a successful referendum.
- The Steering Group will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained or when the Parish Council considers its service are no longer required.
- The Steering Group will advise the Parish Council of the disposal of any remaining grant funds held in accordance with any conditions imposed by the grant funders and in the best interests of the Parish Council.

Adopted on 6 August 2024

To be reviewed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting (see minutes of that meeting).